

Exploration of the Precision Identification and Support Mechanisms of High-Level Overseas Talents in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: Talent is an important productive force for the competition and development of modern society, which is crucial to the future development of the country. As the main position of talent introduction and cultivation, colleges and universities still face many problems and challenges in attracting and supporting overseas high-level talents. This paper examines the policies and support services for recruiting overseas high-level talent in key domestic universities, specific regions, and representative first-class institutions. It explores innovative approaches for the precise recruitment of overseas talent and addresses shortcomings in the current talent recruitment policy framework. Focusing on three key aspects—"precise talent identification," "innovative talent recruitment models," and "comprehensive service guarantees"—the paper provides actionable policy recommendations and operational guidelines that are both replicable and scalable. These suggestions aim to support the implementation of a more proactive, open, and effective talent policy, enhancing universities' strategies for attracting and retaining top-tier international talent.

Keywords: Colleges and universities; Overseas talents; Precision identification; Support mechanisms

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1. Current situation of the introduction of overseas high-level talents in universities

Talent is the cornerstone of a nation's strength and development. "We need to emphasize that the Party should manage personnel, focus on the world's scientific and technological frontiers, the main economic battlefields, the major needs of the country, and the lives and health of the people; thoroughly implement the strategy of strengthening China through talent in the new era; comprehensively train, attract, and make good use of talent; accelerate the development of a major talent center and innovation hub in the world; and provide talent support for basically realizing socialist modernization by 2035," Xi said. He added that this would lay a solid human resource foundation for building China into a great modern socialist country by 2050^[1]. The report of the 20th National Congress of the CPC specifically addressed the strategic importance of talent development in education, science, and technology, emphasizing that talent is a critical resource for achieving national

rejuvenation and winning international competition. Currently, as the world undergoes profound changes unseen in a century, the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation has entered a pivotal period. A new wave of scientific and technological revolution and industrial transformation is sweeping the globe, with countries vying to seize opportunities. This has intensified international competition for talent. In response, governments worldwide are vigorously seeking to attract high-level overseas talent, recognizing it as a key strategy for enhancing regional competitiveness and fostering innovation. In China, the steady progress in the construction of “double first-class” universities underscores the need for a teaching staff that is not only “internationalized” but also “globalized.” This involves cultivating globally minded educators and encouraging cross-border talent exchange.

Talent competition has entered a new phase, characterized by increasing mobility and unprecedented intensity. As the primary institutions for talent recruitment, universities face strategic challenges in attracting, utilizing, and retaining high-level talent ^[2]. However, there are significant obstacles in this process. From an international perspective, other governments have imposed pressures on China’s talent recruitment efforts, and the competition for global talent may escalate under new geopolitical conditions. Domestically, challenges include limited channels for identifying high-level talent and an over-reliance on single methods of recruitment. The rapid influx of overseas returnees also presents difficulties in verifying their qualifications and backgrounds, as mechanisms for conducting comprehensive checks are underdeveloped. Furthermore, universities need to enhance their career platforms for talent. This includes improving on-campus environments, fostering academic atmospheres, and promoting integration between domestic and international staff. Support services, such as healthcare, housing, education for children, and retirement policies for foreign professionals, require significant upgrades. In light of these challenges, it is evident that the mechanisms for recruiting overseas high-level talent must be innovated, and the systems supporting their integration and well-being need substantial improvement.

2. Special practices of major provinces and regions

2.1. Characteristic practices of major provinces and cities

In addressing the demand for overseas high-level talents, local requirements for education, overseas work experience, age, and service duration collectively reflect “high standards” and “precise differentiation.” For instance, Beijing emphasizes distinguishing among talent categories, further dividing entrepreneurial and research and development teams within broader team introductions ^[3]. Provinces such as Jilin, Fujian, and Guangdong, along with cities like Shenzhen, Shanghai, and Xi’an, have developed talent classification catalogs ^[4]. These catalogs tailor policies to specific talent categories, enabling more focused, calibrated, and effective implementation. Additionally, key industries and groups are prioritized, with a strong emphasis on attracting overseas talents in integrated circuits, new displays, artificial intelligence, biomedicine, and creative cultural industries.

Regarding mechanisms for introducing overseas high-level talents, provinces and regions leverage their unique strengths to innovate recruitment strategies. For example, Northeast China supports key industries and major projects by guiding universities, research institutes, and enterprises to attract and retain top-tier talents. Efforts include fostering cross-border and regional academic exchanges, co-developing projects, and building platforms for innovative talent development ^[5]. The Central region emphasizes utilizing overseas Chinese resources by establishing “overseas talent liaison stations,” providing industrial and policy information,

and introducing conducive talent development environments. Meanwhile, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai focus on coordinated efforts involving government platforms, organizational talent demands, overseas recommendations, and talent agencies, thereby advancing market-oriented mechanisms for talent recruitment.

In terms of service and support for overseas high-level talents, regions address practical concerns, investing resources in housing, family resettlement, children's education, medical care, and tax incentives. High-level talent service centers and digital platforms have been established, offering diverse benefits and fostering enthusiasm through robust support for career development, optimized housing environments, and comprehensive security measures.

2.2. Experience in domestic first-class universities

In advancing the accurate identification and recruitment of talent, many Chinese universities, particularly those engaged in “Double First-Class” initiatives, have undertaken significant personnel system reforms to build high-level faculty teams that meet world-class academic standards ^[6]. These reforms enable institutions to clearly define their specific needs, optimize their strategies, and introduce talent in a targeted manner. This demand-driven approach not only enhances the quality of recruitment but also aligns with global employment systems, making it easier to attract overseas talents returning to China. Moreover, such reforms streamline career development pathways, allowing talents to integrate into domestic academia more effectively and efficiently.

In the realm of overseas talent resource acquisition, key universities are increasingly focused on creating robust talent databases. For instance, Northwestern Polytechnical University leverages big data and artificial intelligence technologies to develop a “talent radar system” that identifies potential recruits at the international forefront ^[7]. In terms of recruitment strategies, many universities have formulated policies specifically targeting high-level overseas talents. These include establishing dedicated recruitment teams, collaborating with overseas talent liaison organizations, alumni associations, and regional hometown associations, and creating international talent communities or overseas recruitment stations. Such efforts strengthen alumni connections and facilitate the targeted dissemination of recruitment information to enhance accuracy and efficiency ^[8].

To broaden recruitment channels, universities are adopting a hybrid online-offline approach. Initiatives include hosting offline scholar forums, organizing international academic conferences, and conducting global cloud-based live recruitment events. Additionally, participation in international video-based recruitment fairs ensures seamless integration of virtual and physical outreach, continuously expanding recruitment networks to attract top global talent.

3. Suggestions for accurately recruiting and supporting overseas high-level talents

The Central Talent Work Conference systematically summarized the guiding principles for China's talent development with its “Eight Adherences.” It outlined a forward-looking mission and vision for national talent cultivation, providing a strategic direction for universities in recruiting overseas high-level talents. However, under current circumstances, both the quantity and quality of recruited overseas talents fall short of meeting the urgent demands of university reform and development aligned with international standards. Recruitment efforts lack sufficient focus, policies require further refinement, and the implementation of support measures needs to be significantly strengthened. Addressing these challenges is essential to better serve the evolving

needs of universities and align with global academic and institutional benchmarks.

3.1. Clear development orientation and precise talent identification

In addition to creating opportunities and providing services, colleges and universities must prioritize aligning individuals with appropriate roles to maximize their potential. Institutions should focus on their development goals, adjust teacher training plans at various stages, and adopt a long-term perspective. This includes proactively addressing the nation's strategic needs, basing efforts on disciplinary strengths, and scientifically planning talent team development in advance^[9]. Furthermore, accurately positioning and managing talent is crucial. As major cities compete in talent acquisition, universities must ensure their recruitment strategies align with local conditions to avoid wasting human resources^[10]. Some institutions overly emphasize attracting high-level overseas talent without considering the alignment with their cities' and schools' specific contexts, resulting in double waste of resources and time^[11]. To address this, universities should optimize their talent teams and allocate resources more strategically for talent acquisition. Finally, it is essential to oversee the entire talent selection process. Recruiting overseas talent requires overcoming challenges such as time, location, and cultural differences while ensuring comprehensive evaluation and supervision of potential hires. This process demands support from national and government entities as well as a robust institutional framework. Universities must strengthen their foundational strategies, emphasize thorough assessments, and aim to attract talent that truly contributes value and is effectively utilized.

3.2. Innovative talent acquisition channels and enriched talent recruitment platforms

Currently, domestic cities and universities are actively recruiting high-level overseas talent and aligning with international standards. To enhance overseas recruitment efforts, universities should leverage online resources to identify exceptional young talent through "cloud recruitment" and virtual forums. Establishing overseas talent bases is also essential. This involves collaborating with overseas talent liaison organizations, alumni associations, and hometown associations to integrate talents, projects, funding, and infrastructure into cohesive networks. Colleges and universities can capitalize on opportunities to engage with international frontiers, explore collaborations with overseas institutions, and recruit outstanding global talent to enhance their academic standing. Beyond market recruitment and external outreach, universities can adopt "talent-attracting-talent" strategies. For example, they can encourage provincial experts, entrepreneurs, overseas returnees, and domestic and international institutions to recommend candidates. This approach can gradually create a robust network of high-end talent, fostering sustainable talent acquisition and development. Expanding industry-academia platforms is another effective strategy. Universities should continue developing science and innovation bases, strengthen connections with government and research institutions, and enhance strategic scientific and technological capabilities. By doing so, they can stimulate talent vitality, unleash potential, and promote sustainable progress in talent recruitment and utilization.

3.3. Strengthening service guarantees and prioritizing people

After "planting the buttonwood tree and attracting the phoenix," ensuring that the "phoenix" lives and works in peace and contentment becomes a critical priority in talent attraction. This requires comprehensive support policies for landing and service guarantees. For talents, security policies addressing work and life after their introduction are paramount. While current security policies are largely similar across regions, timely responses to talent needs and improvements in service content and delivery are necessary^[12].

3.3.1. Strengthening supporting services and establishing a “one-stop” service system

For high-level overseas talents, the principle of “people-oriented” service must guide the communication and support efforts during their introduction process. Universities should designate specialized personnel and create dedicated service desks to oversee talent introduction services. For world-class talent teams and scientific researchers, expedited channels should be established to attract them, forming a “one-stop” service model that seamlessly integrates work, living, and development. This approach ensures the “seamless docking” of services for talents ^[11]. Moreover, introducing overseas high-level talents is both a protracted endeavor and a time-sensitive competition. Universities must prioritize strategies to secure talent promptly and gain a competitive edge ^[13]. Enhancing the professionalism of management service personnel is essential for successful talent recruitment. Staff should possess international standards of competence, strong communication skills, professional knowledge, and a comprehensive understanding of university, national, and regional talent policies. This ensures that talents are well-informed and prepared. Additionally, universities should explore online service systems to streamline processes, minimize service delays, and maintain transparency throughout the introduction process. Establishing efficient, open, and transparent systems will facilitate smoother talent integration and retention.

3.3.2. Coordinating resources and meeting talent needs

The primary concerns of high-level overseas talents often include medical care, housing, and children’s education. Local governments have introduced three types of housing support for such talents: relaxing restrictions on housing purchases in cities with regulations, constructing talent apartments, and providing housing subsidies ^[12]. In terms of medical security, designated hospitals often provide green channels for high-level talents, facilitating convenient medical consultations and treatment. Regarding children’s education, targeted lists of schools and coordinated communication efforts can ensure a smooth transition for the children of talented individuals. In the future, universities should collaborate with local governments and other stakeholders to establish human-centered management and comprehensive service standards. Efforts should focus on providing high-quality transportation, medical care, and everyday conveniences for high-level talents. Preparing talent apartments and ensuring smooth housing transitions for returning overseas talents is vital. Universities should also coordinate with local real estate management departments to clarify housing purchase policies for talents ^[14]. Equally important is the provision of medical and family support services. Universities should actively address the enrollment needs of talents’ children and ensure seamless integration into local education systems. This holistic approach will enhance the satisfaction and productivity of high-level talents, strengthening their contributions to the university and the broader community.

3.3.3. Building platforms to promote talent development

Beyond security service policies, the development and incentive policies available in China are another area of concern for high-level overseas talents. A conducive work environment is crucial for enhancing productivity and job satisfaction. Universities should prioritize investments in laboratory construction and scientific research teams, foster a robust academic atmosphere, and ensure the orderly and coordinated progress of scientific research. By providing state-of-the-art hardware and software conditions, institutions can build their reputation and establish a virtuous cycle of talent acquisition and development ^[15]. For high-level talents recruited from overseas, universities must enhance cultivation efforts tailored to their specific needs. This involves initiating diverse research projects, ensuring smooth communication channels, and facilitating the

integration of talents into local academic and professional communities. Universities should promote the integrated allocation of resources such as talent, projects, funding, and research bases. Furthermore, granting team leaders greater autonomy allows them to take on significant responsibilities, effectively fostering a robust mechanism for talent development and support.

4. Conclusion

The cornerstone of constructing world-class universities lies in developing first-class teaching faculties. The current global landscape presents both challenges and opportunities for talent acquisition. Universities, particularly “double first-class” institutions, must assume a leading role in cultivating talents for fundamental research. When recruiting high-level overseas talents, universities should adopt a comprehensive approach: coordinating personnel efforts, ensuring supervision throughout the process, and providing holistic training services. Such initiatives will lay a solid foundation for nurturing a vast pool of exceptional talents. By creating an environment where everyone aspires to excel, strives to develop their potential, and fully utilizes their skills, universities can contribute significantly to the nation’s strategic goal of becoming an innovative global leader and a strong talent-driven nation by 2035.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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