

## **Plan**

To contract with a partner marketing firm we have used with some success in China already, to run a PR campaign to make UK more attractive for high school leavers in China. Every year in China some 9 million high school seniors take a very tough set of exams known as the gaokao. They study for these exams for years and they take them in big proctored secure testing centers. When the scores come out in late June students know whether they have scored high enough to get into their desired university in China. Inevitably, there are many very bright students who do not get the scores they hoped for and re-assess their options. At this point, considering a mid-ranked US university like UK can be appealing to some. But, up to now, UK has not been identified as an option for these potential applicants, even though, technically, it would have been quite possible for them to apply. So, the campaign aims to raise awareness of UK, to create easily accessible, Chinese-language portals for applications that are on popular Chinese digital platforms, and to facilitate completed applications during late summer time. By stating that UK now accepts the gaokao score, we are signaling that UK understands and respects the gaokao, and that we will factor it in to our holistic admissions review. We are not changing or lowering any standards for admission to UK. We are simply allowing students to submit the gaokao as one element in their application.

## **Rationale**

UK, like all our peer institutions, especially those in demographically unfavorable regions such as ours, is in a tough competition to maintain and/or increase undergraduate enrollments. Recruiting out of state students and international students is key.

## **What are other universities doing?**

LSU and UNH are 2 US publics that have announced they accept gaokao scores:

<http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201809/25/WS5ba98b64a310c4cc775e7d82.html>

<https://www.unh.edu/main/gaokao>

Then there are also several US private universities that accept them. U San Francisco was among the first to do so.

Many European and many Australian and other universities also accept the gaokao.

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**UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY ACCEPTS CHINESE “GAOKAO” SCORES FOR ADMISSION**  
**Kentucky One of Few U.S. universities to Accept Gaokao for Direct Enrollment**

**LEXINGTON, Ky., March XX, 2019** -- The University of Kentucky -- a tier 1 major public research university and the flagship institution of the state of Kentucky -- will begin accepting scores from China’s National College Entrance Examination (the *gaokao*) as part of its holistic admissions process for the 2019-2020 academic year.

The decision reflects the university’s commitment to an admissions process that is inclusive of academically prepared applicants from around the world, including those graduating from China’s vast system of public high schools.

“The University of Kentucky recognizes the value of accepting a *gaokao* score from our Chinese public school applicants,” said Audra Cryder, director of International Enrollment at the University of Kentucky. “The *gaokao* is a very rigorous test in core academic subjects. It is securely administered and evaluated. And it is an exam that is continuously being reformed and improved. If a student can perform well on one of the hardest tests in the world, we believe that reflects well on their commitment to their studies.”

Starting this year, Chinese high school graduates may apply to the University of Kentucky by submitting an application for admission, their *gaokao* score report, their high school transcript, and an assessment of their English language.

As part of its current admission policy, the University of Kentucky does not require Chinese students to submit ACT or SAT scores for admission. Instead of replacing a holistic assessment of the student, a *gaokao* score offers the Office of Undergraduate Admission a useful window into a student’s academic preparedness and commitment to their studies which can be considered alongside their other application materials.

“The University of Kentucky is an inclusive community, and we aim to reflect that in our admissions process,” said University of Kentucky President Eli Capilouto. “We evaluate different forms of student accomplishment and signs of college readiness. By allowing students to include *gaokao* results in their applications, we are creating opportunities for bright students from China to better demonstrate their potential as students and members of this academic community.”

University of Kentucky Provost David Blackwell agreed, saying that “we know there are many high-achieving smart students who may wish to consider coming to a major university in the United States once they receive their *gaokao* scores.

We want them to know that we will assess their applications in a fair and consistent manner. We will facilitate admitted students' transition into any number of our undergraduate degree programs, and we look forward to their academic success here throughout their time as members of our community."

In making this decision, the University of Kentucky will become one of only a small handful of U.S. universities to accept the *gaokao* for admission.

In taking this step, the University is signaling that it welcomes academically prepared students from China's diverse public school system, joining about 1,000 universities around the world, including many universities in Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Germany, Italy, and Singapore that also accept the *gaokao*.

Consistent with its holistic approach to admissions, the University will not be setting a strict minimum cutoff score for admission or consideration and will instead evaluate the entirety of each student's application.

To ensure that candidates have the English language proficiency necessary to succeed at the University, *gaokao* submitting students will be subject to the same language proficiency requirements as other international students and will need to submit scores from the TOEFL, IELTS, PTE, or DET.

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