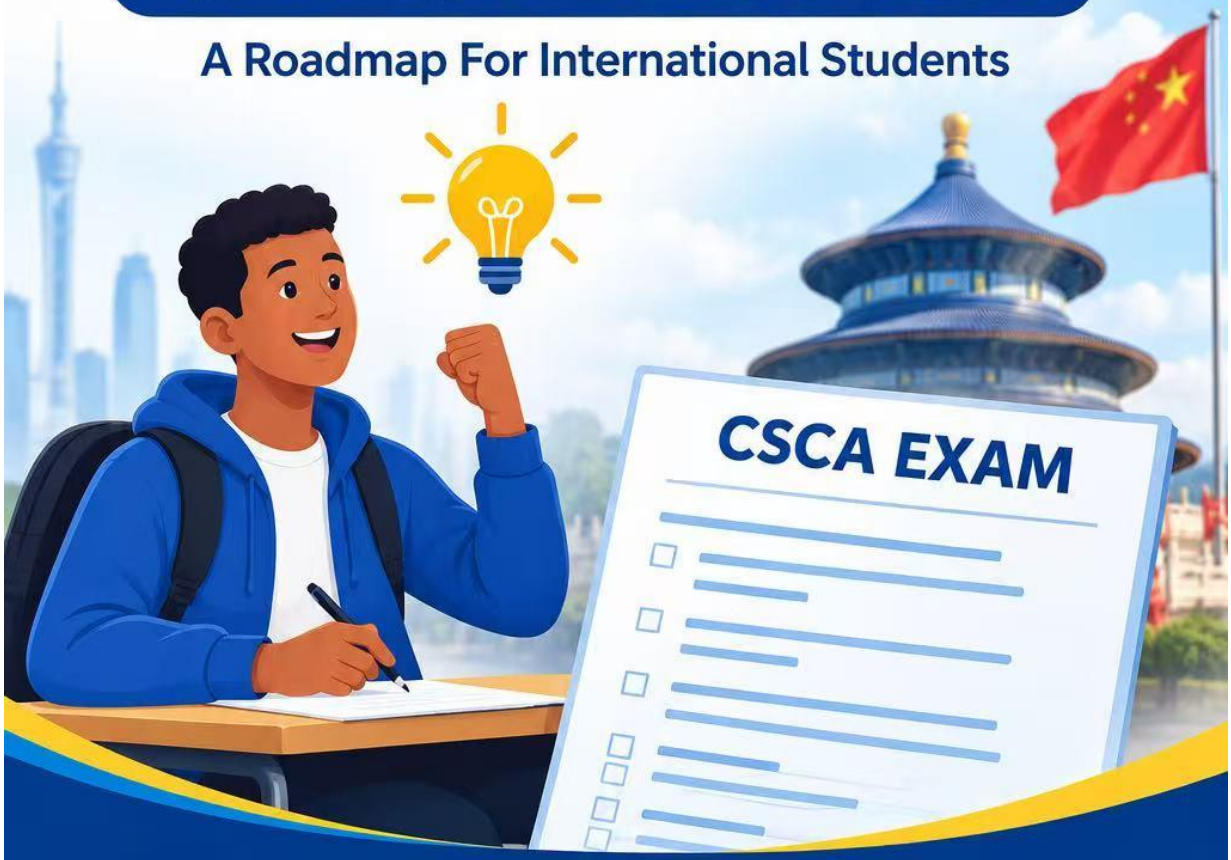
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Study in China Build Your Future

Guide to the CSCA Exam

A Roadmap For International Students



Study Guidance

Exam Preparation

Success Strategies

Your Future Our Priority

— Let's Move Towards Your Dream Together —

Guide to the CSCA Exam

The guide on how to navigate the new admission requirement in Chinese Universities and how to prepare.

With the new China Scholastic Competency Assessment (CSCA) exam for international students, the process might feel overwhelming and confusing. This guide breaks down the strict technical requirements and core academic subjects you need to master, transforming a daunting challenge into a clear, step-by-step path to successful university application and admission to a top Chinese university.

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About this Guide

This is an unofficial guide that is intended to help international students who are looking to study in China understand the test.

guide represents our best research and understanding of the current landscape.
This guide is intended as a preparation resource, but always verify dates and requirements with the official

Disclaimer

The CSCA information regarding the test is developing quickly. This guide represents our best research and understanding of the current landscape.

This guide is intended as a preparation resource but always verify dates and requirements with the official CSCA website before booking your exam. We welcome feedback from students to keep this guide up to date - if you spot a change, let us know at **eduprostudy@163.com**.

II. What is the CSCA? Understanding the CSCA Exam

The **China Scholastic Competency Assessment (CSCA)** is an entrance test for international undergraduates, created to give Chinese universities a common benchmark for judging whether applicants are ready for degree study.

The test is developed and administered under the **China Scholarship Council (CSC)**. Beginning with the **2026 intake**, the **CSCA score report (transcript)** becomes a **mandatory** document for undergraduate applications to Chinese Government Scholarship universities.

Before CSCA: For a long time, getting into Chinese universities as an international student was confusing and inconsistent. The main challenge was that students came from different countries with different education systems and curriculums. This made it extremely difficult for Chinese universities to fairly compare applicants' academic abilities, especially in subjects like mathematics where curriculum rigor and grading standards varied dramatically between countries. A student with 90% in math from one country might have a completely different skill level than a student with 90% from another country. There was no standardized way to assess whether international students had the foundational knowledge needed for Chinese university programs.

What CSCA Does: The CSCA completely changes this. It creates one clear, standardized test that all universities recognize and trust. For international students, this is a game-changer: you finally know exactly what you need to prepare for, how you'll be evaluated, and what schools are looking for.

What Is It? According to the China Scholarship Council (CSC), the CSCA is a fair and scientific test that measures whether you're ready for university-level study. Think of it as China's way of making international admissions as structured and rigorous as the gaokao (the national college entrance exam for Chinese students) but designed to work for students from any educational background around the world. Students must take the CSCA exam before applying for CSC scholarships or universities that require these results for admission.

Key Facts:

- **First Global Exam:** November14, 2026
- **2027 Schedule:** 5 sessions annually (January, March, April, June, December)
- **By 2028:** Expected to be mandatory for ALL undergraduate applicants
- **Registration Deadline:** October 15-21, 2026 (for the November 14, 2026 exam session).

Check the other deadline for other exam session on the official website (csca.cn) ● **Official Website:** https://csca.cn **Why the CSCA Matters:**

The CSCA replaces the old document-based admission system with a transparent, standardized evaluation comparable to China's gaokao (for domestic students) or SAT/A-Levels internationally.
It ensures:

- **Fair evaluation** across diverse educational systems
- **Unified standards** for academic readiness
- **Merit-based selection** for scholarships and admissions

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III. Exam Structure & Subject Requirements

The exam consists of **5 subjects**. You do not necessarily take all of them; your selection depends on your major.

Subject	Time	Questions	Language	Who Needs It?
Mathematics	60 min	48 Multiple Choice	English or Chinese	MANDATORY for all applicants.
Physics	60 min	48 Multiple Choice	English or Chinese	Required for Engineering, Computer Science, and Physical Sciences programs.
Chemistry	60 min	48 Multiple Choice	English or Chinese	Required for Medicine (MBBS), Chemical Engineering, and Biological Sciences programs.

Important Notes:

- Science, engineering, agriculture, and medical majors typically require **at least one** of Physics or Chemistry. Always verify with your target university's specific requirements.

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IV. Subject Requirements by Program Type

Your specific exam subjects depend on two factors: your Major and your Language of Instruction.

Please take note that these are not official, you need to double check with the university you are applying for which subject they require for a specific program, please visit the university official admissions guide.

Category A: Design, Film & Arts Majors (Your Focus)
Includes: Visual Communication, Architecture, Animation, Film Production, Fine Arts, Fashion Design.

Language of Instruction	Mandatory CSCA Subjects	Why?
Chinese-Taught	1. Mathematics (English or Chinese) 2. Humanities Chinese	You need "Humanities Chinese" to prove you can read art history/theory textbooks. Math is a national requirement for all degrees.
English-Taught	1. Mathematics (English or Chinese)	You are exempt from the Chinese test, but Math is still required to prove basic academic logic.

Note for Architecture: Some universities classify Architecture as "Engineering" rather than "Arts." In this case, you might also be required to take Physics. Check your specific university's brochure.

Category B: STEM Majors
Includes: Engineering, Computer Science, Physics, Math.

Language of Instruction	Mandatory CSCA Subjects
Chinese-Taught	Math + Physics + STEM Chinese
English-Taught	Math + Physics

Category C: Medicine (MBBS) & Biological Sciences *Includes: Clinical Medicine, Pharmacy, Biology.*

Language of Instruction	Mandatory CSCA Subjects
Chinese-Taught	Math + Chemistry + STEM Chinese
English-Taught	Math + Chemistry (Some universities may also require Physics)

Category D: Business & Social Sciences

Includes: Economics, Law, International Relations, Business Administration.

Language of Instruction	**Mandatory CSCA Subjects**
Chinese-Taught	Math + Humanities Chinese
English-Taught	Math Only

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V. Detailed Syllabus (Official 2025 Edition by CSCA)

Mathematics (100 Points)

- **Sets & Inequalities**: Set operations; Quadratic and rational inequalities.
- **Functions**: Domain/Range, Monotonicity, Parity; Power, Exponential, Logarithmic, and Trigonometric functions; Arithmetic/Geometric sequences; Basics of Derivatives/Calculus.
- **Geometry & Algebra**: Analytic geometry (Lines, Circles, Ellipses, Hyperbolas, Parabolas); Vectors; Complex Numbers; Solid Geometry (Space coordinates).
- **Probability & Statistics**: Classical probability; Mean/Variance; Normal distribution.

Physics (100 Points)

- **Mechanics:** Velocity/Acceleration; Newton's Laws; Momentum/Impulse; Work & Energy; Circular Motion; Simple Harmonic Motion.
- **Electromagnetism:** Coulomb's Law; Ohm's Law; Magnetic Induction; Lorentz Force; Faraday's & Lenz's Law.
- **Thermodynamics:** Molecular theory; Ideal gas equation; First law of thermodynamics.
- **Optics:** Reflection/Refraction; Interference/Diffraction.
- **Modern Physics:** Photoelectric effect; Atomic structure; Nuclear physics.

Chemistry (100 Points)

- **Basic Concepts:** State changes; Chemical equations; Solution pH/Concentration; Ideal Gas Law.

- **Properties & Reactions:** Inorganic substances (Acids, Bases, Salts, Metals); Organic compounds (Hydrocarbons); Redox reactions; Ion reactions.
- **Theory:** Periodic trends; Chemical bonds/Intermolecular forces; Reaction rates/Equilibrium; Electrochemistry.
- **Experiments:** Lab safety; Gas identification; Purification methods. **Professional Chinese (100 Points)**

This is NOT HSK. It tests academic language ability.

- **Science Track (理科中文):** Math symbols, Physics laws, Lab operations, Data chart interpretation.
- **Humanities Track (文科中文):** Literature, Philosophy, Law, History, Education, Politics.
- **Question Types:** Character recognition, Vocab fill-in-the-blank, Paragraph completion, Reading comprehension.

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VI. Understanding China's Education System

How China's System Differs

1. Academic Rigor & Standards

- Gaokao legacy: The domestic entrance exam is known for its difficulty
- Foundation focus: Strong emphasis on fundamental concepts
- Problem-solving speed: Quick recall and application under time pressure
- Theoretical depth: Deep understanding over breadth

2. Teaching Style

- Lecture-based: More teacher-centred than Western universities
- Examination-oriented: Regular tests and assessments
- Group study culture: Students often study in groups
- Homework load: Expect substantial daily/weekly assignments

3. Academic Calendar

- Fall Semester: September - January
- Spring Semester: February/March - July
- Long summer break: July - August
- Short winter break: January - February

4. Language Environment

- Chinese-taught programs: Expect 100% instruction in Chinese
- English-taught programs: May still require basic Chinese for daily life
- HSK requirement: Most Chinese-taught programs require HSK 4-5
- Academic Chinese: Different from conversational Chinese (focus on specialized vocabulary)

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VII. Scoring & Validity

- **Score Release:** 7 business days after the exam (Electronic report via csca.cn).
- **Validity:** Scores are valid for **2 Years**.
    - *Note:* Admissions officers generally prefer scores from the most recent intake cycle.
- **Usage:** Universities can verify your score online using the certificate number. Percentile rankings are also provided to universities to judge your global competitiveness.

VIII. Application Timeline & Planning

Critical Dates for 2027 Intake

Phase 1: Preparation (Now - November 2025) **September -**

October 2026:

- Research target universities and programs
- Identify required CSCA subjects
- Begin intensive preparation (minimum 3-6 months recommended)
- Gather application documents (transcripts, recommendations, etc.)

November 2026:

- ☑ CSCA registration opens
- Complete registration on https://csca.cn
- Pay exam fees (450 RMB ($63 USD) for 1 subject, 700 RMB ($98 USD) for 2+) ● Run technical checks for online testing

Phase 2: Examination (December 2026 - June 2027)

2026 Exam Sessions:

- November,2026
- December 2026
- January 2027
- March 2027
- April 2027
- June 2027

Phase 3: Application Submission (January - June 2027)

Recommended Timeline for September 2027 Enrollment

Option A: Early Bird (Recommended)

- Take CSCA: November 2026 or January 2027
- Receive scores: Late December 2026 / Early February 2027
- Apply to universities: February - April 2027
- Receive admission decisions: March -June 2027
- Apply for visa: May – September 2027

Option B: Standard Track

- Take CSCA: March or April 2027
- Receive scores: Late March / Late April 2027
- Apply to universities: April - June 2027
- Receive admission decisions: May - July 2027
- Apply for visa: June - September 2027

Option C: Last Chance

- Take CSCA: June 2027
- Receive scores: Late June 2027
- Apply to universities: July 2027
- **Risk:** Very tight timeline, no room for retakes

Phase 4: Visa & Preparation (June - August 2027)

- Receive JW202 form from university
- Apply for X1 student visa at Chinese embassy
- Book flights and accommodation
- Complete pre-departure preparations

Sample Month-by-Month Action Plan

Month	Key Actions	Priority Level
October 2026	Intensive study, join prep courses, take mock tests	High
November 2026	Register for CSCA, finalize study plan	High
December 2026	Take CSCA exam, continue applications	High
January 2027	Receive scores, submit applications OR retake if needed	Medium
February 2027	Follow up on applications, prepare for interviews	Medium
March-April 2027	Interview period, additional document requests	Medium
May-June 2027	Admission decisions, scholarship notifications	Low
July-August 2027	Visa application, pre-departure	Low

General Rule: Take the exam **6-8 months before** intended enrolment to allow time for:

- Score release (1-2 weeks)
- Application processing (1-3 months)
- Retakes if needed (minimum 1 month between attempts)
- Visa processing (1-2 months)

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IX. How to register for the CSCA

Where to register

All candidates register on the official CSCA website at csca.cn. This is the only place to create your account, pick subjects, choose a test window, and pay the fee.

When to register

For the inaugural sitting, registration opens in November 2026. From 2026 onward, registration windows are published ahead of each sitting across the year. Always check the portal for the latest dates.

Step by step registration process

1. **Create your account** on csca.cn with your full name exactly as in your passport. Verify your email and complete your personal profile.
2. **Fill in your application basics**. Choose the program language and intended major direction so the correct exam subject options appear.
3. **Choose your subjects**. Mathematics is required for all applicants, while Physics and Chemistry are optional (depend on the major). Professional Chinese (Humanities Chinese or STEM Chinese) is required for applicants applying for Chinese-taught programs.
4. **Pick a test window**. The first global inaugural test will be held in November, 2026. From 2027 there are five sittings each year (scheduled in January, March, April, June, and December). Pick a schedule that will leave enough time for score release before your earliest university deadline.
5. **Select the test mode.** Applicants can choose to do an at-home online test. Some locations will add offline centres over time.
6. **Upload your photo and ID details.** Follow the portal's format and size rules. Double-check passport number, name, and date of birth.
7. **Pay the fee through the portal.** The current fee is RMB 450 for one subject or RMB 700 total for two or more subjects. Keep your payment confirmation.

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X. Technical Requirements (Strictly Enforced)

The exam uses a "Home-Based Online" format with AI and human proctoring. You must meet these requirements or you cannot take the test.

Primary Device (Computer)

- OS: Windows 10 / 11 OR Windows 7 SP1 (64-bit).
- ❌ MacOS is NOT SUPPORTED. (Do not use Mac).
- Storage: At least 2GB free space (Avoid installing on C drive if possible).
- Screen: Resolution ≥ 1366×768.
- Webcam: Built-in or external USB (≥720p). Must face you directly.
- Audio: Microphone and Speakers required. ❌ Wireless Headphones/Earbuds are PROHIBITED.

Drafting Tools (CRITICAL UPDATE)

Standard paper is PROHIBITED. You must use one of the following:

1. A small Whiteboard with an erasable marker.
2. A blank sheet of paper inside a Transparent Document Sleeve/Bag with an erasable marker.

- *Rule:* You must erase your notes in front of the camera at the end of the exam.

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XI. The "Two-Device" Setup Guide

You are required to have a Secondary Monitoring Device (Phone or Tablet).



1. Positioning

- Place it on a tripod or stable stand.
- Angle: 45 degrees behind you (to your side).
- View: Camera must see You (Profile) + Your Hands + Your Computer Screen + The Desk.

2. Device Settings (Must Follow)

- Airplane Mode: ON (This is critical just in case someone calls your phone).
- Wi-Fi: ON (Enable Wi-Fi *after* turning on Airplane mode).
- Do Not Disturb: ON.
- Power: Keep it plugged into a charger, or make sure the battery is sufficient for the entire duration of your exam.

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XII. How Proctored Exams Work

Exam Formats (3 Options)

Option 1: Remote Home-Based Testing (Online)

- **Availability:** Worldwide during early rollout period
- **Setup:** Take the exam from your home with remote proctoring

Requirements:

1. **Computer:**
    - **Windows 8.1 or higher** (Mac NOT supported currently)
    - Functioning webcam (built-in or external USB)
    - Microphone
    - Administrative access to install proctoring software

2. **Internet Connection:**
    - **Minimum:** Stable 10+ Mbps
    - **Recommended:** 20+ Mbps for reliability
    - Backup 4G hotspot highly recommended

3. **Secondary Device:**
    - Phone or tablet for additional monitoring angle
    - Camera must be functional

4. **Testing Environment:**
    - Private, quiet room with closed door
    - Well-lit space (natural or artificial light)
    - Clear desk - NO books, notes, or unauthorized materials
    - No other people in the room

Not Allowed:

- Beverages or food
- Books, notes, or any reference materials
- Calculators
- Scratch paper (whiteboard and marker may be allowed - confirm)

Option 2: On-Site Computer-Based Test (CBT)

- **Availability:** Selected testing centres in major countries
- **Current Locations:** Vietnam, Thailand, India, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, and Kazakhstan

Advantages:

- More reliable (no internet issues)
- Controlled environment
- Technical support on-site

Process:

- Register for CBT option
- Arrive 30 minutes early with valid passport
- Follow center's security protocols
- Complete exam on provided computer

Option 3: Paper-Based Test

- **Availability:** Very limited, specific locations only
- **Results Delay:** 14 working days (vs. 7 days for online/CBT)

Exam Day Timeline & Rules

Pre-Exam (30-60 Minutes Before)

1. **Clear the Room:** No other people, no books, no electronics.
2. **Login:** You **must** log in 30–60 mins early.
3. **Verification:** Complete Facial Recognition and hold your **Original Passport** to the camera.

4. **Environment Scan:** You will be asked to pan your camera 360° around the room. **During the Exam**

- **No Leaving:** You cannot leave your seat (unless approved for emergency).
- **Eye Contact:** Keep eyes on the screen. Looking away frequently triggers AI flags.
- **Drafting:** Use your whiteboard/transparent sleeve only.
- **Tech Issues:** If internet drops, log back in immediately (answers are auto-saved). If the issue persists, contact the proctor via the software.

Post-Exam

1. **Submission:** Wait for the "Scroll submitted successfully" message.
2. **Erase Notes: Show your whiteboard/sleeve to the camera and ERASE IT** before closing the software.
3. **Exit:** Close the application.

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XIII. Technical Readiness Checklist

Computer Requirements

Operating System:

- Windows 8.1 or higher (Windows 10/11 recommended)
- Mac computers NOT currently supported for online testing **Hardware:**

- ☐ Processor: Intel Core i3 or equivalent (i5+ recommended)
- ☐ RAM: Minimum 4GB (8GB recommended)
- ☐ Storage: At least 2GB free space for exam software
- ☐ Screen: Minimum 1024x768 resolution (1920x1080 recommended)

Peripherals:

- ☐ **Webcam:**
  - ☐ Built-in or external USB webcam
  - ☐ Minimum 720p resolution
  - ☐ Must be able to show face clearly
  - ☐ For external: 6-foot cord recommended for room scanning ☐ Auto-focus OFF or disabled **Microphone:**
- ☐ Built-in or external
  - ☐ Must clearly capture audio
  - ☐ Test with proctor before exam
  - ☐

Software:

- ☐ Latest browser version (Chrome, Firefox, or Edge)
- ☐ Administrative rights to install proctoring software
- ☐ Pop-up blockers DISABLED
- ☐ Antivirus: Add exam URLs to whitelist
- ☐

No VPN during exam **Internet Requirements:**

Minimum Specifications:

- ☐ Download speed: 10 Mbps or higher
- ☐ Upload speed: 5 Mbps or higher
- ☐ Latency: Under 100ms preferred
- ☐ Stability: No frequent disconnections

Test Your Connection:

1. Visit speedtest.net or fast.com
2. Run test at planned exam time (same network load) 3. Run test multiple times over several days
4. If below minimum, consider:
    - Upgrading internet plan
        - Using wired Ethernet connection instead of Wi-Fi
    - Scheduling exam during off-peak hours
    - Arranging testing center option

Backup Plan:

- 4G/5G mobile hotspot ready
- SIM with sufficient data (at least 6GB)
- Test hotspot connection beforehand
- Keep phone charged and nearby (but not in testing room)

Pre-Exam Testing Schedule

2 Weeks Before:

- ☐ Install exam software (CSCA-designated exam client)
- ☐ Run official system compatibility check
- ☐ Test webcam quality on video call with friend
- ☐ Test microphone clarity
- ☐ Run internet speed test
- ☐ Identify any compatibility issues early

1 Week Before:

- ☐ Complete official mock test (when released)
- ☐ Practice with secondary device monitoring angle
- ☐ Do full room scan practice with webcam
- ☐ Clear testing area completely
- ☐ Run system check again Verify firewall/antivirus
- ☐ settings

1-3 Days Before:

- ☐ Final system check
- ☐ Verify exam software updated to latest version Confirm exam
- ☐ language selection

Important Reminders:

- Mac OS is not supported
- Wireless headphones are strictly prohibited
- During the exam, students are required to have a secondary camera for monitoring the side and rear environment (smartphone/tablet is applicable)

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XIV. Exam Time Schedule

Test Session	Exam Date	Beijing Time (UTC+8)	Subject	Duration
Nov 2026	14	14:00—15:30	Professional Chinese	90 minutes
		17:00—18:00	Mathematics	60 minutes
	15	14:00—15:00	Physics	60 minutes
		16:30—17:30	Chemistry	60 minutes
Dec 2026	19	08:00—09:30	Professional Chinese	90 minutes
		11:00—12:00	Mathematics	60 minutes
	20	08:00—09:00	Physics	60 minutes
		10:30—11:30	Chemistry	60 minutes
Jan 2027	23	14:00—15:30	Professional Chinese	90 minutes
		17:00—18:00	Mathematics	60 minutes
	24	14:00—15:00	Physics	60 minutes
		16:30—17:30	Chemistry	60 minutes
Mar 2027	13	14:00—15:30	Professional Chinese	90 minutes
		17:00—18:00	Mathematics	60 minutes
	14	14:00—15:00	Physics	60 minutes
		16:30—17:30	Chemistry	60 minutes
Apr 2027	24	14:00—15:30	Professional Chinese	90 minutes
		17:00—18:00	Mathematics	60 minutes
	25	14:00—15:00	Physics	60 minutes
		16:30—17:30	Chemistry	60 minutes
Jun 2027	26	08:00—09:30	Professional Chinese	90 minutes
		11:00—12:00	Mathematics	60 minutes
	27	08:00—09:00	Physics	60 minutes
		10:30—11:30	Chemistry	60 minutes

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XV. CSCA Exam Preparation Checklist

1. The Devices & Power

- ☐ A Windows PC (MANDATORY)
- ☐ Tripod/Stand
- ☐ Long Chargers/Power Bank
- ☐ Ethernet Cable (Recommended)
- ☐ Backup 4G hotspot
- ☐ Built-in camera or external USB webcam
- ☐ Built-in microphone or external wired microphone
- ☐ Wired headphone/earphone (wireless is prohibited)

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XVI. Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Is CSCA mandatory for all international students?**
   CSCA is required for admission to undergraduate programs at Chinese Government Scholarship universities.

2. **Is there an age limit?**
   No upper limit. However, candidates under 14 must have a guardian's consent and assistance to register.

3. **What are the universities that require CSCA?**
   All chinese government scholarship (CSC) universities require students to take CSCA exam.

4. **What exam subject should I take?**
   The subjects you must take for the CSCA are determined primarily by your intended major and the language of instruction. Mathematics is MANDATORY for all applicants, regardless of whether you are pursuing Engineering, Medicine, or Design.

   For STEM and Medicine majors, you must take an additional science subject. Furthermore, if you are applying to any Chinese-taught program, you must include one of the two Specialized Chinese tracks (either STEM Chinese or Humanities Chinese) to demonstrate your academic language proficiency.

5. **What is the language of the exam?**
   The language options depend on the subject. You do not have to take all subjects in the same language. For the three Basic Disciplines (Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry), you have a choice to take the exam in either English or Chinese. This is designed to allow international students to use their strongest academic language for technical subjects.

   However, the Professional Chinese subjects (Humanities and STEM Chinese) are offered in Chinese ONLY, as the entire purpose of these tests is to measure your readiness to handle university-level material in the Chinese language.

6. **If I don't apply to a university that offers Chinese government scholarships, can I still take this exam?**
   Students are welcome and encourage all students planning to study in China to take the CSCA exams. An excellent CSCA score report can be a strong asset in your application to any Chinese university, comprehensively demonstrating your academic abilities.

7. **Can I use a Mac if I install Windows on it?**
   The official rule states "MacOS is not supported." Using Boot Camp or Parallels is risky as the anti-cheat software may flag the virtualization as a security threat. It is strongly recommended to borrow a native Windows laptop.

8. **Can I retake the exam if I fail?**
   Yes. Since there are multiple sessions (Jan, March, June, Dec), you can pay to retake it. However, be careful with application deadlines - a June retake might be too late for a scholarship application closing in March.

9. **Can I change my exam subject or language after registering?**
   No. Once the Admission Ticket is generated, information cannot be changed. Verify your choices carefully before paying.

10. **How many times can I retake the exam?**
    There is no limit on the number of times you can retake the CSCA. As long as you pay the exam fee again, you can register for the next available session. However, because of application deadlines and the exam schedule, you will realistically only have 1 or 2 chances to get a score that works for a specific September intake.

11. **Is there a chance for me to study in China if I fail the exam?**
    Yes, you can retake the exam unlimited times, or apply to Chinese universities that don't require CSCA for 2027 intake. Scores are valid for two years.

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XVII. Official Resources & Links

- CSCA Examination Syllabus
- About the CSCA Exam
- CSCA Exam Instructions for Students
- CSCA Home-based online exams
- Registration Process
- Test Center Inquiry

Links to Training Materials:

- CSCA Mock Exam
- SJTU - Math Sample Exam questions
- SJTU Physics Sample Exam questions