Alex Ding
Country: China
School: Blakehurst High School

Alex Ding from Fuzhou came to Australia in 2006. He completed his Higher School Certificate (HSC) in 2007 at Blakehurst High School and received a University Admissions Index (UAI) of 99.85. He was dux of his school, received a Premiers Award for All-Rounded Excellence for scoring 90 or more in every subject, and was named on the HSC Honour Roll for coming first in the state in the German Beginners course.

“I came to Australia because I wanted to learn different languages and it was hard to do that in China. I always loved languages. I learnt English from the age of two and taught myself French and Spanish,” Alex said.

Sydney is a great study destination for international students. It has been voted the world's best city* in 2007 and 2008 for its beautiful landscape, climate, friendly people, affordable accommodation, and quality education and training. It also ranks as one of the top three global cities for employment and business opportunities, alongside London and New York.

“I will go to Oxford University in September to study a Bachelor of Modern Languages and Linguistics. Oxford University is almost as old as England and there are so many traditions. I think it will be an amazing place to learn and study. For now, I am studying at Sydney University.

Studying at a NSW government school helped me enormously as a person. I have learnt about other cultures and about how big the world is. Blakehurst High School is a very multicultural school and the principal encourages students to learn about other cultures. She promotes tolerance, harmony and understanding.

At first it was a little hard to fit in, but I just watched other people and was quickly able to work out Australian values and how to act. Australia is multicultural so you are exposed to many different cultures and cuisines, and you learn so much through their influence. Australians are welcoming and friendly people who enjoy a laid-back lifestyle, which I love. Even the teachers are easygoing and friendly with students.

Blakehurst High School specialises in languages and the amazing facilities made learning languages much easier. My Italian teachers took a group of us to Italy last year where we had intensive Italian language training and got to experience the Italian culture. It was a truly amazing opportunity to travel and see the world which I would not have had back in China. Blakehurst High School also offered other students trips to Japan and Greece.

NSW government schools are much more dynamic and comprehensive compared to schools in China. In China, school is purely academic. Here you don’t need to be great academically but, instead, students are encouraged to excel in whatever they are good at, even if it is music or sport. Also, in China you only have exams but in Australia there are assignments and assessments. I prefer this as it helped me learn my work more thoroughly.

Coming to Australia has opened so many doors for me and changed so many things in my life. I have greater access to resources and travel opportunities and it taught me to live independently. My advice to other students who want to come to Australia would be to learn English as it is the most important thing for getting involved in life and integrating.”

*Anholt City Brand Index (2007-2008) and Conde Nast Traveler 2007

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