

School Description:

Zhangzhou Vocational College opened in 1984 as a public institution of higher vocational education. In 2002 the Fujian provincial government approved the merger of Zhangzhou Vocational College with Zhangzhou Agricultural Mechanical School to form Zhangzhou Institute of Technology. Located at the foot of Ma'an Shan Mountain in Zhangzhou City, the college is at the heart of Zhangzhou College Park.

The campus covers 210,000 square meters. Grounds are beautifully manicured and accented with local flora. Buildings include new classrooms and student dormitories, administrative offices, sport facilities, modern laboratories, shops for technical training, and a library containing 960,000 volumes of books and reference materials. Information technology is at the core of all curriculums. Campus laboratories have more than 2,000 computers. In the past few years the college has grown immensely with the addition of several new buildings and the renovation of many existing ones.

Currently student enrollment is 12,000 and rapidly increasing. Ages range between nineteen and twenty-two. Extracurricular student activities include: basketball, table tennis, badminton, dancing, choral singing, and drawing. Additionally, students have several class outings during a term.

The teaching staff comprises more than 700 faculty members. Currently, the college employs approximately eight foreign teachers from such countries as Australia, Canada, Japan, Philippines, United Kingdom, and the United States. Teacher's ages vary from the twenties to sixties. Classrooms are large and modern. Each room is equipped with a multi-media center that includes a computer, overhead projector, and a sound system. The college has copying facilities for reproducing supplementary materials.

Teacher Accommodations

Teacher accommodations are on campus minutes from classrooms. Faculty apartments are comfortable with two bedrooms, one of which can be used as an office, kitchen, Western style toilets, shower, and a living and dining area. They come fully furnished including a double bed, armoire, two nightstands, dining-room table with four chairs, and living room furniture. Kitchen appliances include microwave, sanitizer, hot plate, butane gas stove, and refrigerator. College also provides a full complement of kitchen utensils, wok, rice cooker, pan, iron and ironing board, and dishes. Amenities include washing machine, air conditioning, and computer with Internet connection. The school is now in the process of consolidating foreign teacher housing into newly remodeled apartments on campus.

Teaching Work Description

Classrooms are modern and furnished with computers and audio-visual equipment. Class sizes tend to be rather large, fifty to sixty students in a large lecture-style classroom. This can be a challenge for language teachers who are accustomed to small classes but with a bit of ingenuity a teacher can adapt his or her teaching style accommodate the larger class size. Students tend to be reserved at first, but once the teacher gains their trust and confidence they will be more responsive in class. Most students had six years of English, which began in middle school and continued through high school. Despite this, their language proficiency ranges from absolute beginner to pre-intermediate. Much of it depends on their former teachers and their willingness to learn the language. Some students are highly motivated while others are completely uninterested. Some students chose the curriculum while many are under parental duress. Overall the students are good natured and friendly.

Teachers are given a fair amount of leeway in teaching. They can follow the recommended text or design their own lessons. The objective is to learn English. Zhangzhou Institute of Technology offers teachers the opportunity to experiment and try new and different methods of teaching. It is unlike a chain language school that has its pre-designed curriculum complete with ironclad methodologies.

A class is two forty-five minute periods with a five-minute break in between. Classes usually meet twice a week. Since English is the premier language for science and technology, especially computer programming, students take an additional three to four English language classes as part of the curriculum. Foreign teachers do not teach all the English language classes. ZIT has a cadre of Chinese English instructors who primarily teach reading comprehension and writing.