



University
of Glasgow



University Communications in International Markets: Experiences in China

Emma Gilmartin & Vivian Zhu

Overview

- Introduction
- Understanding China's Social Media Landscape
- University of Glasgow's Social Media Presence
- Cultural Differences
- Case Studies
- Content That Doesn't Work
- Time for Questions



Introduction – Our Award-Winning Team



The UK-China Business Awards 2026 – Marketing Campaign of the Year



The Herald Education Awards 2026 – Marketing/PR Campaign of the Year

UofG Chinese Social Media Team

Emma Gilmartin - Head of Student Engagement and Social Media Communications

Vivian Zhu - Chinese Social Media Officer

Kuangqing Zeng – Chinese Social Media Officer

Junming Wen – Social Media Intern (Chinese Channels)





University
of Glasgow

Understanding China's Social Media Landscape



- Many widely used Western digital channels are unavailable to most users in mainland China.
- VPN access can be slow and unreliable, and inconsistent for users.





University
of Glasgow

Platforms





University
of Glasgow

Platforms

WeChat 微信



Weibo 微博



Bilibili 哔哩哔哩



RedNote
小红书



University
of Glasgow

University of Glasgow's Social Media Presence





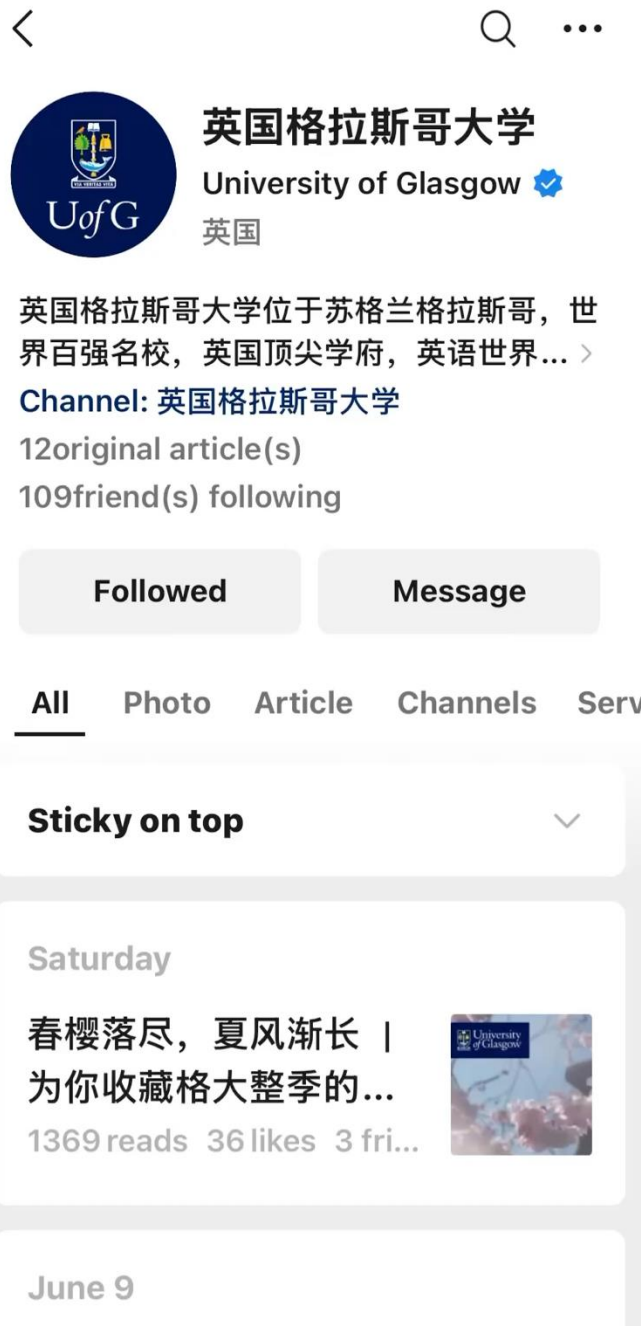
WeChat

Newsletter on your Whatsapp

Format: long form articles, videos and podcast

Active Users: ~1.3 billion monthly

Demographic: Broad user base across all age groups



UofG Followers:
52.5K

Targeted audience: ALL prospective students, current students, parents and alumni

WeChat

Newsletter on your Whatsapp



Strengths:

- All-in-one platform for communication, payments, and services.
- Strong user loyalty and frequent daily usage.
- Hit all target audience, including parents.

Challenges:

- Less effective for content discovery due to recent algorithm change.
- Growing competition from short-video platforms among younger users.

Platforms

RedNote

Instagram & Pinterest – short reels, posts, videos

Format: vertical videos, images, reviews, lifestyle posts, short reels

Active Users: ~300 million monthly

Demographic: Mainly female age from 18 – 35, lifestyle, career & shopping oriented



小红书

UofG Followers: 29K

Targeted audience:
prospective students, current students, and alumni

Platforms & Strength



- **Search-driven Platform**

Users actively seek information, recommendations and advice.

Platforms & Strength

- **Search-driven Platform**



- **High User Trust**

Authentic reviews, experiences and opinions are highly valued.

Platforms & Strength



- Search-driven Platform
- High User Trust
- Preference for genuine content

Youthful, relatable, and non-commercial content tends to perform best.

Platforms

RedNote



Challenges:

- Strict platform policy and moderation on logos and commercial content
- No external links allowed
- No QR codes allowed



University
of Glasgow

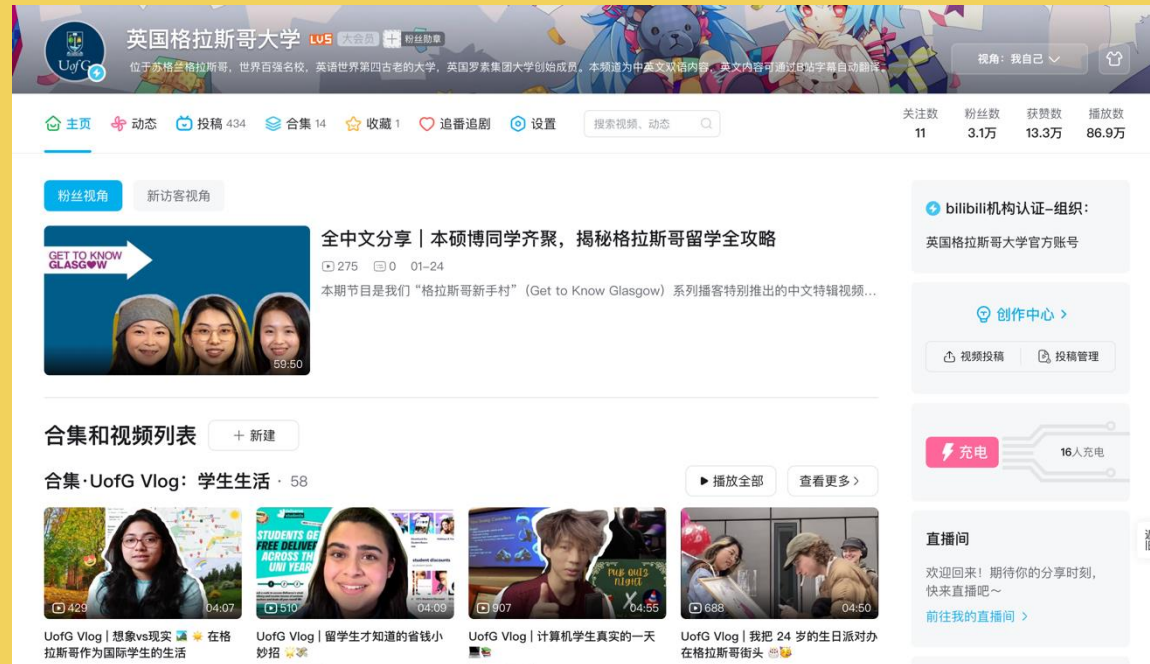
Platforms



UofG Positioning

Followers: 30.7K

Targeted audience:
prospective and
current students



Bilibili

Youtube

Format: long horizontal
videos and short vertical
video

Active Users: ~366-376
million monthly

Demographic: average 26
years old, over 80% under
35, 66% male



University
of Glasgow

Platforms



Weibo

X (Twitter)

Format: short articles

UofG Followers: 54,894

Targeted audience: ALL

Rapid declining in active users

Nice-to-Have if you already have a follower base, not a core channel for your strategy



University
of Glasgow

Recommended platforms

WeChat 微信



RedNote
小红书



University
of Glasgow

Cultural Differences



How To Deal With Cultural Sensitivity?

- Spring Festival
- Year of Horse



Culture Differences

No Email Culture (WeChat)



VS



Cultural Differences

Cute Culture is BIG in China

- Jellycat
- Graduation bear
- WeChat emojis & memes



格大爱我喷雾



Cultural Differences

Chinese GenZ

- Practical, efficient, enjoy life
- Creative, global perspectives
- Require mutual respect
- No 'cash cow'



Sensitive Dates

- 4 April - **Qingming Festival**
- 12 May – **National Disaster Prevention and Reduction Day** (Commemorates the victims of the 2008 Wenchuan Earthquake)
- 4 June – highly sensitive date
- 7 July, 3 & 18 September - **Remembrance Dates**
- 13 December - **National Memorial Day for the Victims of the Nanjing Massacre**



Case Studies



Case Study - Research

How we tell research stories?



UNIVERSITY of GLOUCESTER



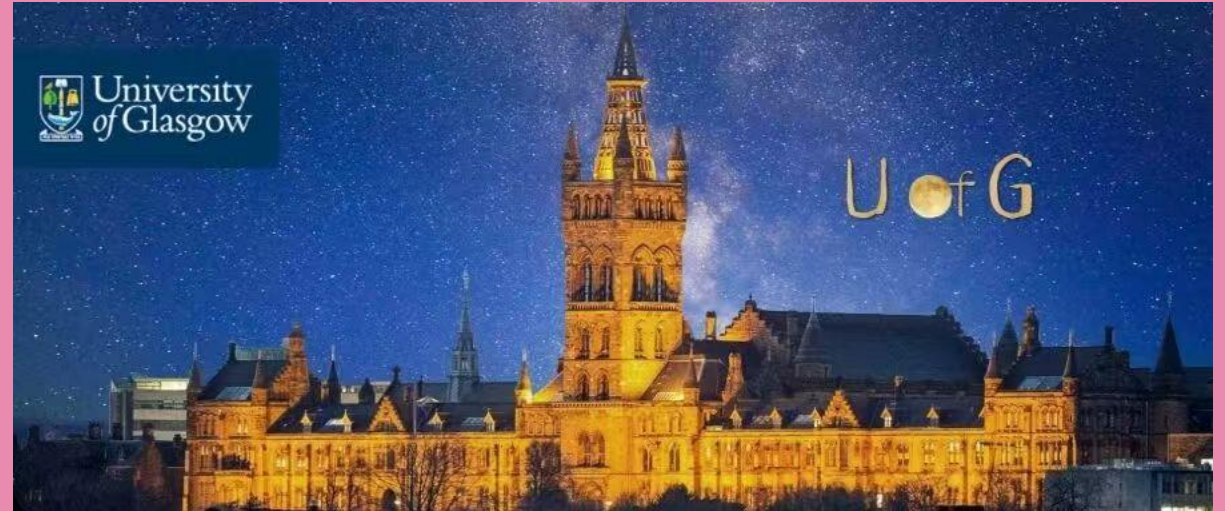
Research Stories

Using special dates as an
entry point

Puppy Day - Research
related to dogs, robot
dogs, epilepsy
treatments and etc.)



Using Chinese Culture Reference as an approach



**Mid-Autumn Festival
- Research on the
moon**



The Importance of Rankings

- QS Global University Rankings
- QS Subject Rankings
- THE Rankings
- US News & Report Ranking



Relatability

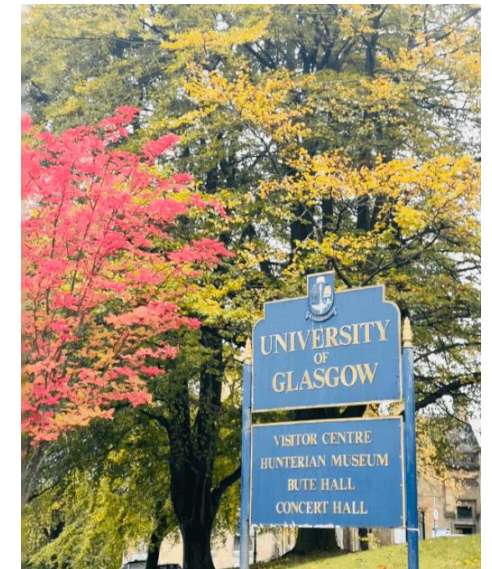
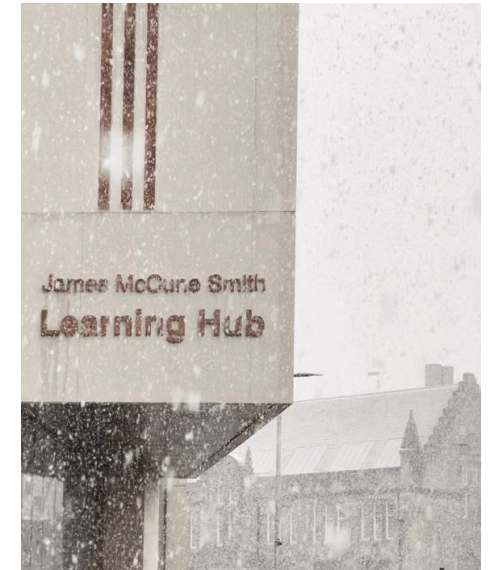
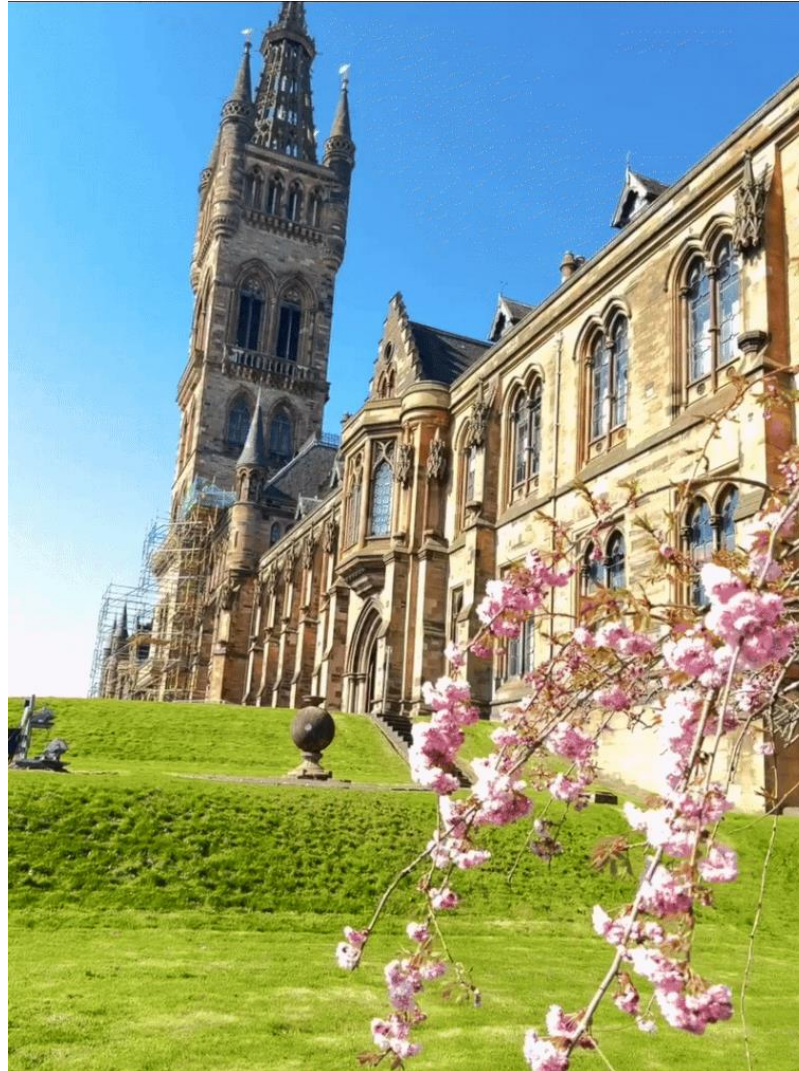
- Things our audiences find familiar/relatable: Harry Potter



507K views, 108K likes, 25K saves, 16K new followers
5.6K “bullet comments” on Bilibili

Campus Scenery

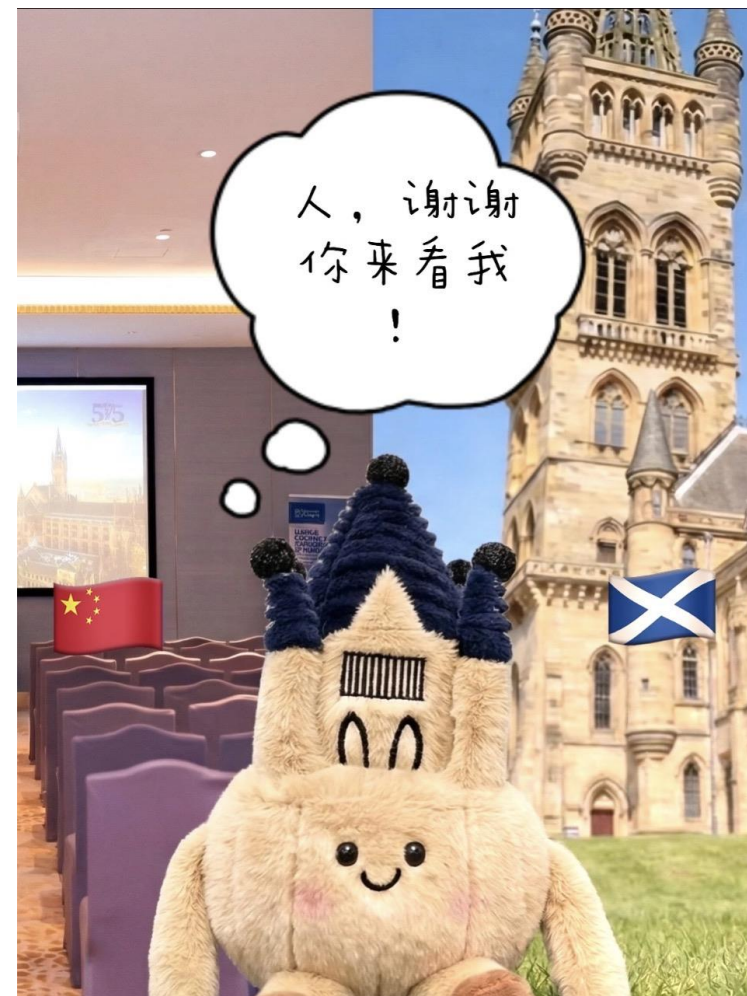
Explore the Campus: “Four Seasons” articles and GIFs



Cute Culture Content



Plushie Toy: Gilbert



Content that might not work for Chinese platforms

- Overly polished or institution-led content.
- Long-form content with too many messages in one video/post.
- Generic content that isn't tailored to Chinese audiences or their interests.



University
of Glasgow

575
FOR THE WORLD SINCE 1451

