Northwestern Polytechnical University (NPU) is located in Xi’an, China’s renowned ancient capital and the gateway to the historic Silk Road. Today, as the ancient city is reinventing itself through science and technology, the university is entering a new phase of growth by taking the opportunity to develop original and cutting-edge innovations.

As with the city, NPU boasts a rich heritage. It has its roots in the State Northwestern Institute of Engineering, which was established in 1958. Governed by China’s Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, NPU has always been a national key university and was one of the first universities selected for the national Project 211 and the Project 985, both of which aimed to raise the research bar at high-level Chinese universities. And in 2017, NPU was selected into the national ‘Double First Class’ plan in 2017, with 17 academic schools, an international education college, an honour college, and a joint educational institution (JEI). The university programmes cover everything from fundamental science and technology, the historic Silk Road. Today, as the ancient city is reinventing itself through science and technology, the university is entering a new phase of growth by taking the opportunity to develop original and cutting-edge innovations.

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NPU’s history can be traced to the State Northwestern Institute of Engineering, which was founded in 1958. It was merged with the East China Institute of Aeronautics and later, the Department of Aeronautics of Harbin Institute of Engineering. Since the founding of the People’s Republic of China, NPU has received strong support from the central government. It was designated as a key national university in 1960, among the first to be selected for the national 211 Project in 1995, and became part of the 985 Project in 2002. More recently, it was named as a class ‘I’ university in the national ‘Double First Class’ plan in 2017.

Throughout the past 80 years, the university has set many records in China and produced leading figures in all walks of life, contributing to China’s socioeconomic progresses. The philosophy we have been following for years is to see students as the basis and take education as the essential task, to put scholars at the centre and promote academic spirit, and to encourage respecting scholars and valuing academic research. We reinforce the value of taking responsibility. These are common values shared and followed by faculty members and students, and will inspire future generations at NPU to strive for our goals.

To become a global university, we need to work on both international collaboration and domestic outreach. For the former, we are promoting internationalization of faculty members and students. We have created platforms and facilities to attract graduates from world-renowned universities, to join us and support overseas exchange and visits of our faculty members to broaden their visions. We also encourage our students to study overseas, and are active in recruiting outstanding international students to study at NPU.

NPU has built close ties with more than 250 universities overseas. Our collaboration network extends to Europe, North America, Africa and Asia. A cooperation with Queen Mary University of London has brought about the first school in the Qingdao Research and Development Institute in Shenzhen, the Yantze River Delta Research Institute and a new campus in Taicang of Jiangsu province. A new research institute is under construction in Beijing. Those centres outside Xi’an have reinforced our capacity to attract talent, train students, and transform research results. Positive effects are starting to show.

We have set up an academic system by disciplinary clusters. While reinforcing our leading positions in aeronautics, astronautics, and marine technology disciplinary clusters, we are also promoting development in materials, mechanical engineering, mechanics, computer science, communications, control sciences, as well as natural science, humanities and social sciences disciplinary clusters to form a comprehensive system.

Next, focusing on cutting-edge technologies and national strategic needs, we are developing emerging interdisciplinary areas, having launched programmes in unmanned systems, medical aspects of specific environment, flexible electronics, ecology, and protection of cultural relics. Faculty members are encouraged to focus more on basic research, and to build cross-disciplinary teams for large-scale projects, so as to drive more original discoveries and enhance academic influences.

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We are striving to be a world-class university with global influence in aeronautics, astronautics, marine technology and other fields. Seeing educating students as the core mission of a university, we take talent fostering as the essential task at NPU. We seek to train our students to be innovative, well-rounded and talented individuals with global perspective, a strong sense of social responsibility, and deep expertise.

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What are the objectives of NPU?

What has been the NPU development path?

What philosophy underpins NPU’s success?

How will you make NPU a global university?

How does NPU support China’s innovation endeavours with its research?