

White Rose University Consortium: College of Arts and Humanities

Arts and Humanities Research Culture in China

Academia

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Cultural Protocols

Students should always address lecturers and professors by their titles, for example, Zhang Jiaoshou (Professor Zhang) or Li Laoshi (Teacher Li); teachers should never be addressed by their first names. If the teacher is a lecturer or senior lecturer they should be addressed as follows: surname + *Laoshi* 老师 (teacher), regardless of their rank. Full professors, associate professors and assistant professors should be addressed as follows: surname + *Jiaoshou* 教授 (professor), regardless of their rank.

In formal English e-mails, people start with Dear + title + surname (e.g. Dear Prof. Jones); in formal Chinese e-mails, however, people start with *Zunjingde* 尊敬的 + teacher's surname + teacher's title (if the person is not a teacher, his or her position, such as director, president, manager, etc., is used, for example, Li Xiaozhang <President Li>, Wang Jingli <Manager Wang>). The layout of a Chinese e-mail is as follows:

尊敬的 (*zunjingde*) + surname + title (Dear ...)

你好! (*ni hao!*) / 您好! (*nin hao!*) more formal and respectful – this is a greeting word necessary for every e-mail

正文 main body

祝, 好 (Best wishes)

Your name

In class students usually wear casual clothes such as jeans, t-shirts, jumpers and there is no strict dress. However, students are not allowed to wear slippers or mini-skirts to classes and libraries.

Casual clothes are not encouraged for oral exams. Students prefer to wear formal clothes (shirt, tie, trousers, leather shoes, a smart jacket, skirt, etc.) Students are not allowed to wear slippers or mini-skirts to exams.

Presentations are not as common at Chinese universities as at UK universities. Students are advised to wear formal clothes to presentations; casual clothes are also fine, but teachers and other students prefer the presenter to be dressed “professionally”.

Students are expected to wear formal smart clothes (shirt, tie, trousers, leather shoes, a smart jacket, skirt, etc.) to the viva.

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Applications

Essential documents

Documents required for application to Chinese universities include a photocopy of your passport; a Bachelor's degree certificate and transcript; letters of recommendation from at least two nominated referees; and a research proposal. Some universities require more information. Tsinghua University, one of the best in China, for example, requires the following documents:

1. A completed Foreigner's Application Form for Admission to Graduate Programmes of Tsinghua University together with a 2x2 inch recent colour photograph signed by the applicant.
2. A personal statement. Applicants to doctoral programmes also need to submit brief statement of their research experience.
3. A photocopy of the degree certificate and academic transcript. (Those who have not yet graduated should provide a proof of education at the current academic institution and an academic transcript.) The original or a photocopy of the degree certificate and transcript should be submitted once the student has been conditionally accepted onto a programme. Applicants to Master's programmes should submit their Bachelor's degree certificate. Applicants to doctoral programmes should submit their Master's degree certificate. All the original documents must be officially stamped.
4. A copy of HSK (the Chinese Language Proficiency Test) certificate and a printout of the results (unless a waiver is approved or the programmes which are offered in English).
5. Two academic references from scholars employed at the level of associate professorship or higher; the reference must include the referee's phone number and email address).
6. A Copy of the personal information page of your passport.
7. An original GRE or GMAT certificate (for applications to the School of Economics and Management).
8. A completed Tuition Scholarship Application Form of Tsinghua University (if applicable, the original). The application fee is RMB 600 (non-refundable) (About GBP 60).

The certificates provided should be in Chinese or in English; otherwise notarised translations in Chinese or English are required. None of the above application documents will be returned.

TIP: please remember to photocopy your application documents before submitting them.

Time scale

New programmes at Chinese universities usually start in mid-September; some universities encourage students to apply from February to July.

Xiamen University procedures for the academic year 2013-14:

Application time: February 1 – July 1 2013. Applicants should send by e-mail the application form generated automatically upon successful online application and any other required documents to the XMU Admissions Office by July 1, 2013. Late applications will not be considered.

Tsinghua University procedure for the academic year of 2012-13:

For graduate programmes delivered in Chinese there are two rounds: 1st round from November 1st to December 31; 2nd round from January 1 to February 28. Both the online application and all accompanying application documents should be completed, and the pack should be received (by online application system) by February 28. Graduate programmes delivered in English: applications may be submitted from November 1st; deadlines are specified according to the programme.

Who to contact

Students usually contact their prospective supervisors first. Supervisors will offer some advice to applicants. Then students can apply through the official application system.

Language requirements

For programmes delivered in Chinese applicants need to take HSK (The Chinese Language Proficiency Test). Students can find information about this test from on the [HSK](#) website.

Application process

The application process at most Chinese universities is similar to that at UK universities. Most top Chinese universities have online application systems. For example, Xiamen University requires applicants to apply online and upload all necessary documents through their [On Line application System](#). Moreover, the university emphasises that online application is mandatory. Applications received by post will not be considered unless students have also completed the online application process.

Study visa / residence permit

All foreign students need a study visa. The website of the [Embassy of China](#) in the UK provides detailed information regarding student visas.

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Costs

Tuition fees

Annual tuition fees at Chinese universities vary from RMB 20,000 (about £2,000; £1, at the time of writing, is approximately RMB 9-10) to RMB 45,000 (about £4,500 pounds) depending on the subject. For example, fees for doctoral programmes delivered in Chinese at Xiamen University are: RMB 24,000 (about 2,400 pounds) per year (humanities including Chinese Language, History, Philosophy, Anthropology & Ethnology); RMB 32,000 (about 3,200 pounds) per year (sciences, engineering, economics, management, law and arts <Music, Fine Arts, Painting, Visual Communication Design, Environment Design>). Fees for doctoral programmes delivered in English are: RMB 32,000 (about 3,200 pounds) per year (humanities); RMB 42,000 (about 4,200 pounds) per year (sciences, engineering, economics, management, law and arts).

[\[Source\]](#)

At Peking University, the tuition fees for humanities Master's programmes are 29,000 RMB (2,900 pounds) per year; the tuition fee for Master's programmes in the sciences are 33,000 RMB (3,300 pounds) per year. For doctoral programmes, the tuition fees are 32,000 RMB (3,200 pounds) and 40,000 RMB (4,000 pounds) per year for these two disciplines, respectively.

[\[Source\]](#)

Living costs

The cost of living in China is comparatively cheaper than in the UK. For example, at Xiamen university and in the City of Xiamen (one of the more expensive cities), on-campus accommodation (utility charges not included) for international students is from RMB 1,500 to 2,400 per month (about GBP 150 - 240). The dorms are equipped with a complete range of amenities, including a telephone, air-conditioning, cable TV, Internet access points, and a separate bathroom. Off-campus accommodation costs around RMB 1,500 to 2,000 a month (GBP 150 - 200). Living expenses in the City of Xiamen are around RMB 1,000 (GBP 100) per month.

At Peking University and in the city of Beijing, accommodation costs approximately 30,000 RMB per year (about GBP 3,000); board (meals) is approximately 10,000 RMB per year (GBP 1,000); other miscellaneous costs such as traveling, clothes, social activities are approximately 5,000RMB (GBP 500) per year.

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Funding

Scholarships

Many leading Chinese universities and colleges have established their own scholarship schemes. For example, [Peking University](#) provides Peking University Academic Excellence Scholarships. [Xiamen University](#) has Chinese Government Scholarships, Confucius Institute Scholarships, Fujian Provincial Government Scholarships and XMU Scholarships for International Students.

Students can go to the university scholarship website to see which scholarships are suitable for them. Most leading Chinese universities have international student offices and English-language websites.

Other scholarship websites [Jiao Tong University](#), [Tsinghua University](#), [Peking University](#), [Tongji University](#)

The application process for different scholarships starts and ends at different times. Students should go to the university scholarship websites and submit applications before the relevant deadlines.

Student loans

Chinese universities do not provide financial support or offer student loans for international students.

TIP: Chinese universities do not provide financial support or loans to international students, but there are different kind of scholarships and assistant teaching/research roles available.

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PhD

Structure of doctoral programme

Students at most universities are required to study for 3 years; at some universities such as East China Normal University they are required to study for 4 years. The number of years spent on the PhD also depends on how well students meet their supervisors' requirements.

Politics and English are the two common required courses at all Chinese universities. By the PhD stage, the main task is to research and publish papers; therefore, both research achievements and academic papers are obligatory.

[\[Source\]](#)

Nearly all Chinese universities require students to publish some papers before attending the final thesis viva; teaching experience and exams are not required.

For example, Changjiang University requires that:

1. Students publish at least three professional papers in domestic core journals or in international professional journals (as the first author).
2. At least one of the papers must be included in the SCI or EI index.
3. Students complete all required courses.
4. Students pass the final thesis viva.

[\[Source\]](#), [\[Source\]](#), [\[Source\]](#)

TIP: Nearly all Chinese universities require students to publish some papers before the degree can be awarded.

PhD support

PhD students meet their supervisors at least once a month; meeting twice or three times a month is quite common. Supervisor input is similar to that in the UK. Supervisors provide guidance, recommend books/articles, set assignments, discuss papers, provide information on conferences and funding, etc. Chinese universities implement the Supervisor Responsibility System: one PhD student has only one supervisor.

PhD students enrolled on a 3-year programme need to attend research training modules in their first year; PhD students enrolled on a 4-year programme need to attend research training modules in the first two years. Students can also apply for different training modules in other universities or for summer training modules.

Progress is monitored in two ways. First, it is monitored by the student's supervisor; however, due to other work commitments, some supervisors cannot monitor every aspect of their student's research. A second way of monitoring progress is the university monitoring system. There are three stages that a PhD student must go through before handing in his/her dissertation and attending the final viva:

1. Thesis proposal (in the first term of year 2, students introduce their topics; supervisors and professors judge the value of the topics and give advice)
2. Mid-term exam (in the first term of year 3 when students are halfway through their research. Students need to report their progress and any problems; supervisors and professors give advice)
3. Pre-viva (about 2 months before the final viva, students have a mock viva with their supervisors and professors)

PhD thesis

The length of a PhD thesis is typically from 50,000 to 150,000 words (Chinese characters). For example, Fudan University suggests the length should be no less than 100,000 words; Shanghai Jiaotong University requires 80,000 to 100,000 words; Xiamen University only requires no less than 50,000 words.

Presentations are not as common at Chinese universities as at UK universities. Students are advised to wear formal clothes to presentations; casual clothes are also fine, but teachers and other students prefer the presenter to be dressed "professionally".

A certain number of theses are required to be printed before they are submitted. Theses should also be submitted online as a WORD or PDF file. Visit the [Fujian Normal University](#) and [Lanzhou University](#) websites for further details.

Viva

In China, almost all the universities have the same viva procedures, although there are some subtle differences with regard to the date and length of the examination. At [Tsinghua University](#) for example the PhD student must submit all the necessary documents, signed by his/her supervisor together with the supervisor's detailed review, approximately 2 months before the viva. The thesis should also be submitted in electronic form so that it can be kept in the archives.

The institution sets up an oral thesis defense committee of 5 or 7 experts. The chair must be a doctoral supervisor and active in a related academic field. S/he must not be the PhD student's supervisor. The committee must include two or three suitably qualified experts from other academic institutions, and the committee members need to have been examined and approved by the academic degrees committee of the university.

Approximately one month before the official thesis defense, the home institution will hold a mock viva. Examiners at the mock viva are usually from the home institution. The academic leader is the chair of the committee. The PhD student's supervisor is a member of the committee. If the PhD student does not pass the mock viva, his/her period of study is extended.

[\[Source\]](#), [\[Source\]](#)

There is no unified set time for a viva at Chinese universities. The personal statement lasts about 30 minutes. Then members of the examiner group ask questions about the PhD student's thesis, achievements, academic treatises and other matters relating to the student's research. The whole process takes between one and two hours.

In the formal viva, the committee must include two or three suitably qualified experts from other academic institutions. Examiners at the mock viva are from the home institution.

A few days before the viva, an announcement will be released on university bulletin boards and the university's website. Teachers and students are welcome to attend the viva at most universities. For example, [Shanghai Jiao Tong University](#) announces forthcoming vivas about a week before they take place.

Employment

PhD students can work as teaching or research assistants. For example, [Capital Normal University](#) in Beijing allows PhD students to teach or assist for up to 4 hours per week. The university pays PhD students RMB 1,000 (about £100) a month for this role. The [University of Science and Technology](#) of China allows PhD students to teach for up to 10 hours per week; the university pays them RMB 1,000 plus teaching hours wage. PhD students who work as research assistants can earn between RMB 1,150 and 1,650 (GBP £115 - £165) per month depending on their subjects. PhD students can also do other part-time jobs outside universities; for example, they may work as private tutors, private training school teachers or language training school teachers.

Visiting other institutions, exchange programmes and placements

In China, all Project 985 and Project 211 universities (an initiative implemented by the Chinese government with the aim of building and establishing a set of elite and world-leading universities) and some other universities have student exchange programmes. Such programmes are mostly of three types: courses of study for one or two years, summer programmes and short-term programmes. In general, there are two kinds of exchange programme: government-supported and self-supported. Universities bear the total or part cost of tuition, accommodation, books, overseas medical and insurance, international travel, meals, and some other personal expenses for government-supported students. Self-supported students pay all relevant costs themselves. Students can find relevant information from their parent university's website or the international office of the university.

For example, [Sun Yat-sun University](#) has implemented several favourable policies to encourage high-achieving students at different levels to study at other national or international institutions. High-achieving students from [Fudan University](#), Shanghai Jiaotong University, Zhejiang University, Southeast University, Zhejiang Industrial University, and Zhejiang Sci-Tech University can choose to take an exchange programme at any of the six universities. See also the [International Office of The North University of China](#).

Procedures for arranging placements can be found in the exchange programs. According to the regulations of the [Ministry of Education of China](#), after studying outside or abroad, all government-sponsored students in China must return and fulfill their obligation to work for a period of two years in China or they must pay for the breach of contract. Self-funded students have to seek employment on their own.

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Beyond PhD

Jobs

In September 2007, The Academic Degrees Committee of the State Council, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and Personnel decided to organize a research group to carry out a survey on the quality of PhD graduates across the country and published an authoritative report "Survey of the Development Quality of Doctoral Education in China". So far, it is the largest investigation into the quality of PhD graduates. According to the report, 84.9% of the 31,251 PhD graduates' jobs are highly relevant to their research fields.

[\[Source\]](#)

For all PhD graduates from 1995 to 2008 in China, 43.9% of PhD graduates chose to engage in teaching and scientific research work at colleges and universities, combined with 10.8% in scientific research institutes and 2.9% postdoctoral researchers; nearly 60% of PhD graduates continued to engage in scientific research and teaching work. Of them, 5.2% work for governmental organizations, 15.2% found jobs in companies and public service organizations. Those going abroad and working in the army account for 2.9% and 2.3% respectively.

[\[Source\]](#)

Career progression

In order to attract talented people, many local governments and universities provide one-off research grants and housing allowances. According to the research needs and the individual applications, the governments and universities will provide assistants, equipment and funding to qualified PhD graduates. For example, the city of Guangyuan will give each PhD graduate RMB 150,000 (£15,000) in one-off housing allowances and RMB 900 (£90) per month.

[\[Source\]](#)

Taiyuan University of Technology provides each PhD graduate with one-off RMB 50,000-100,000 (£5,000-10,000) housing allowances, RMB 50,000-200,000 (£5,000-20,000) research grants and RMB 35,000-45,000 (£3,500-4500) job subsidies per year.

[\[Source\]](#)

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Glossary

Academic titles

教授 (*Jiao shou*, Professor)

副教授 (*Fu jiao shou*, Associate professor/Senior Lecturer)

讲师 (*Jiang shi*, Lecturer)

客座教授 (Visiting professor / guest professor)

研究助理 (*Yanjiu zhuli*, Research assistant)

助教 (*Zhu jiao*, Teaching assistant)

退休教授 (*Tuixiu jiaoshou*, Emeritus professor)

名誉教授 (*Mingyu jiaoshou*, Honorary professor)

博士后研究员 (*Boshihou yanjiuyuan*, Postdoctoral research fellow)

研究员 (*Yan jiu yuan*, Research fellow/Researcher)

专职教师 (*Zhuanzhi jiaoshi*, Full-time teacher)

兼职教师 (*Jianzhi jiaoshi*, Part-time teacher)

辅导员 (*Fu dao yuan*, Mentor)

博导 (*Bo dao*, a person who can guide PhD students)

硕导 (Shuo dao, a person who can guide Master students)

导师 (*Dao shi*, Supervisor)

校友 (Alumnus / alumna)

Academic terms

论文 (*Lun wen*, Thesis/dissertation)

实习 (*Shi xi*, Internship) - On which students gain professional experience

答辩 (*Da bian*, Viva)

毕业 (*Bi ye*, Graduation)

图书馆 (*Tu shu guan*, Library)

公开课 (*Gongkaike*, Open class)

课程 (*Kecheng*, Course / curriculum)

必修课 (*Bixiuke*, Required / compulsory course)

选修课 (*Xuanxiuke*, Elective / optional course)

基础课 (*Jichuke*, Basic course)

专业课 (*Zhuanyeke*, Specialized course)

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Web Links

Xiamen University [On Line application System](#)

Information regarding student visas at the [Embassy of China](#) in the UK

Academic Excellence Scholarships from [Peking University](#)

Chinese Government Scholarships, Confucius Institute Scholarships, Fujian Provincial Government Scholarships and XMU Scholarships for International Students from [Xiamen University](#)

Other scholarship websites [Jiao Tong University](#), [Tsinghua University](#), [Peking University](#), [Tongji University](#)

Information about publication of theses from [Fujian Normal University](#) and [Lanzhou University](#)

Information about viva procedures at [Tsinghua University](#)

Information about working as a teaching or research assistant at [Capital Normal University](#) in Beijing and [University of Science and Technology](#) of China

Policies to encourage high-achieving students at different levels to study at other national or international institutions at [Sun Yat-sun University](#)

Exchange programmes at [Fudan University](#)

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