

Cardiff University

The Confucius Institute at Cardiff University was founded in 2007 as a partnership with Xiamen University.

On its website, Xiamen University details the recruitment process for Chinese staff going to the Confucius Institute at Cardiff University.¹ According to a recruitment form downloaded and translated by UK-China Transparency, applicants must:

- Provide details of their “political characteristics” and “ethnicity”
- Be evaluated by a Communist Party Committee

The recruitment notice on Xiamen’s website also asks applicants to fill in the ‘National Application Form for Teachers Going Abroad’, which has been translated and reproduced by UK-China Transparency. The form demands applicants must:

- Promise to abide by the laws of the PRC (while abroad)
- Promise not to have a child whilst working in the UK
- Have their current employer give a reference detailing their:
 - “Political attitude”
 - Ability to comply with CCP “*Discipline for Foreign Affairs*” (外事纪律) guidelines

The *Discipline* guidelines demand, amongst other things, that individuals “act in strict accordance with the CCP’s policies in all foreign activities” and “strictly implement the request and report system” (the system is referred to as 请示报告制度).² In CCP terminology, this refers to the system whereby CCP members pass information to their superiors: it mandates authoritarian practices such as peer surveillance, peer intimidation and informing.³

In response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request asking about the legal status of staff at the Confucius Institute and whether it has received advice on this matter, Cardiff University stated:

“There are three types of roles for which individuals are recruited by China. They are:

- The co-director [Chinese director]
- The tutors
- The volunteers

“None of the people recruited by China for these roles are employed by Cardiff University. These roles are not vacancies for Cardiff University. The only rights and privileges they share with university staff are:

- Being assigned an email address and some access to our university network
- Being given some workspace
- Being given a laptop.”

Cardiff University’s claim that “these roles are not vacancies” is in line with the legal requirements of the Tier 5 dedicated visa scheme set up by the UK government to enable the staffing of Confucius Institutes in the UK. However, the University’s own renewal agreement signed in 2018 states that:

¹ <https://archive.vn/Kuc4u>

² See Baidu Baike, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/党的外事纪律/9640843>

³ See, for example, <https://archive.vn/unmso> This CCP announcement from 2019 states that the ‘request and report system’ is “an important way for our Party to maintain political discipline”.

“Two collaborating parties appoint one Director respectively.”

Meanwhile, Cardiff University’s agreement with Xiamen University signed in 2018 states that the “Chinese Director of the Confucius Institute” must be a member of the Confucius Institute’s governing Board. The original agreement with Xiamen signed in 2013 stated:

“The Institute is managed by a director nominated by Cardiff and an academic director nominated by [Xiamen University].”

In response to inquiries by UK-China Transparency, Cardiff stated that the 2018 agreement was “**superseded by a new agreement**, dated August 2021. [...] For the avoidance of doubt, the 2021 agreement added a new clause that states that tutors and volunteers from China posted in Cardiff are subject to the same policies and UK laws as every other member of Cardiff University staff.”