

Coventry University

The Confucius Institute at Coventry University was founded in 2016 as a partnership with Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics (JUFE).

UK-China Transparency was not able to access materials from JUFE relating to the recruitment process for staff at the Coventry Confucius Institute.

The Chinese government agency responsible for Confucius Institutes (formerly Hanban, now Centre for Language Exchange and Cooperation, CLEC) states in publicly available material that staff from Chinese universities going to work at Confucius Institutes in other countries must fill in the ‘National Application Form for Teachers Going Abroad’ (国家公派出国教师申请表), which is available online.¹ UK-China Transparency has translated and reproduced both the form and the order mandating its use.

The form demands that applicants:

- Provide details of their “political characteristics” and “ethnicity”
- Promise to abide by the laws of the PRC (while abroad)
- Promise not to have a child whilst working in the UK
- Be evaluated by a Communist Party Committee
- 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, stated that they were not staff of the University and that:

“They are given Non-payroll status, which entails access to a university email account and access to the library and photocopying services.”

An agreement signed in 2015 between Coventry University and the Chinese government agency responsible for Confucius Institutes (then called Hanban) states:

“The Institute activities must be in accordance with the Constitution and By-laws, and also respect cultural custom, shall not contravene concerning the laws and regulations, both in UK and China.”

Coventry University quoted this clause in response to a Freedom of Information request asking, “Do the staff from the PRC at the University's Confucius Institute have to abide by Chinese law on campus?”

¹ (NB that opening these pages may entail security risks): CLEC’s letter can be found here

<http://www.yxnu.net/info/1426/23573.htm> – the ‘National Application form’ itself can be found here <https://archive.vn/I5FsF>

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”.