

### De Montfort University

The Confucius Institute at De Montfort University was founded in 2013 as a partnership with the University of Science and Technology Beijing (USTB).

A post on the USTB website gives details of the recruitment process for staff at the De Montfort Confucius Institute.<sup>1</sup> The notice states that applicants must have “good professional and political qualities”, “love the ancestor-land [China]” and be aged between 22 and 50 years old.

The form hosted on the notice webpage additionally states that applicants must:

- Provide details of their “political characteristics” and “ethnicity”
- Provide details of a close family relative and their “political characteristics”

UTSB makes applicants fill in a form in English and in Chinese. The English form carries no reference to the content of the bullet points above, except “ethnicity” which is referred to as “Chinese ethnic group”. This may be an attempt to deceive international partners about the nature of UTSB’s recruitment processes.

Although this is not stated explicitly by USTB, 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.<sup>2</sup> Teachers must fill in the form at a central online portal (pmplatform.chinese.cn). 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).<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

An agreement signed in 2020 between USTB and De Montfort University states that:

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<sup>1</sup> <https://archive.vn/2crKo>

<sup>2</sup> (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/15FsF>

<sup>3</sup> See Baidu Baike, <https://baike.baidu.com/item/党的外事纪律/9640843>

<sup>4</sup> 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”.

“The Confucius Institute at De Montfort University, which is a China-United Kingdom cooperation project, shall serve the purpose of Confucius Institute, operate according to the laws and regulations of England and Wales and under the jurisdiction of the courts of the England and Wales...”

In response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request asking whether staff at the Confucius Institute or the Institute itself must obey Chinese law in the UK, or whether De Montfort has signed agreements to this effect, the University stated:

“The University is not privy to the contracts that staff have signed with the University of Science and Technology Beijing in China before joining the Confucius Institute at De Montfort University, therefore this is not information we hold.”

In response to a separate FOI request asking about the legal status of staff at the Confucius Institute and whether it has received advice on this matter, De Montfort stated:

“In relation to the Chinese language teachers and Directors, they are appointed by the University of Science and Technology, Beijing (USTB), and then join De Montfort University (DMU) as honorary staff members via the form for 'Propose A Special Part-Time Academic Appointment' and they receive a 'DMU Honorary Confirmation Letter' (please see examples attached). They hold Tier 5 visas for temporary workers.

“Confucius Institute staff members are not on the university's payroll and have a contract with the partnership university, USTB, for their terms and conditions, such as annual leave and pay rises for example. When they join DMU, they are given a university ID card which allows them access to some buildings within the university, and to privileges such as borrowing items from the library, during their time here but they are not permitted access to DMU systems.

“[...] they are the approved special full-time academics invited from the partnership university, USTB.

“[...] they are employed by the partnership university, USTB.

“We have no record of having received legal advice about the status of these roles.”