

Hull University

The Confucius Institute at Hull University was founded in 2016 as a partnership with Tianjin Normal University (TNU).

A post on the TNU website gives details of the recruitment process for staff at the Hull Confucius Institute.¹ It states that applicants must:

- “Generally” be under 35 years of age

A recruitment form produced by TNU (reproduced and translated by UK-China Transparency) further states that applicants must:

- Provide details of their “political characteristics” and “ethnicity”

Although this is not stated explicitly by TNU, 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.² 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).³ 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.⁴

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, Hull University stated:

“The University does not employ any of the staff within the Confucius Institute. Confucius Institute employees are recruited to and employed by Tianjin Normal University, which is the partner for the Confucius Institute. Although not employed by University, we do provide office space, and provide them with University email addresses so that they can access the essential services for their work.”

Hull’s agreement with TNU signed in 2016 states:

¹ <https://archive.vn/1KvKK>

² (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>

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

⁴ 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”.

“This Agreement and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with it or its subject matter or formation (including non-contractual disputes or claims) shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of England and Wales.”

A further agreement signed in 2021 states:

“[The Confucius Institute] will operate according to the local needs, laws and regulations of the UK”.