

Leeds University

The Confucius Institute at Leeds University was established in 2012 as a partnership with the University of International Business and Economics (of Beijing, UIBE).

A post on UIBE's website 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:¹

- 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 post itself underlines that the applicant's current employer/department evaluate the applicant's "political thoughts".

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 inquiring about the legal status of the staff at its Confucius Institute, Leeds University stated:

"They are Academic Visitor roles [...] The Academic Visitor role is a non-contracted engagement with the University, so many of the rights and privileges do not apply. Please see below for the Uol terms and conditions, policies and procedures which do apply: [...] Whilst you hold the title, you are expected to act at all times in good faith and in the interests of the University, and in line with lawful instructions and University values and standards. [...] The University will not tolerate acts of harassment, bullying or victimisation. This includes such behaviour either against colleagues or any other individual with whom you interact in the course of your duties, including students."

The University also added:

"...they are not "staff," as they are not employees and do not appear in staffing lists. However, locally, they may be regarded as "staff," part of the wider BCI team. They have staff cards and usernames etc., as part of their Academic Visitor privileges [...] they have non-contracted employment status with the University."

The University also shared a document detailing its relationship with the UK office of the Chinese government agency responsible for Confucius Institute, which acts as visa sponsor for Chinese staff who work at the Confucius Institute. This document states that the University and its Confucius Institute are responsible for the "Day to Day Management" of the staff, and that Confucius Institute staff from China are "employed at" a UK location.

¹ <https://archive.vn/nkev4>

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".