

Strathclyde University

Strathclyde University's Confucius Institute was formed in 2012 as a partnership with the Tianjin Municipal Education Commission (TMEC). Tianjin is one of four 'province-level municipalities' in China, large cities with enhanced administrative status, the other three being Shanghai, Beijing and Chongqing.

UK-China Transparency was not able to locate resources relating to the recruitment of staff for Strathclyde Confucius Institute. This may be because, unlike other British universities, Strathclyde's partner is a Chinese government body, not a Chinese university.

Although this is not stated explicitly by TMEC, 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 request, Strathclyde stated of its Confucius Institute staff from China:

"The Chinese Exchange Teachers are school-teachers from Tianjin City or postgraduate students of our partner universities in Tianjin or Chengdu. They are not University roles and are not employed by the University. All of these individuals are based and working in schools of different local authorities, not in the University.

"The Chinese Director of the University's Confucius Institute for Scotland is employed by the University on a two year fixed-term contract, ending on 30 September 2024."

Regarding the legal status of these individuals and whether it had received legal advice, the University stated that it "has internal advisors in Human Resources who advise in this regard."

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".

In response to a separate FOI request, Strathclyde University stated:

“The University does not have any staff from the PRC at the University’s Confucius Institute who have to abide by Chinese law on campus.”