

University College London

The Confucius Institute at University College London (UCL) was founded in 2006 as a partnership between Peking University and the Specialist School and Academies Trust (SSAT). The Confucius Institute was transferred to UCL's Institute of Education (IOE) in 2012.

On its website, Peking University details the recruitment process for Chinese staff going to the Confucius Institute at UCL.¹ According to a recruitment form downloaded and translated by UK-China Transparency, applicants must:

- “Generally” be under 35 years old
- Be assessed on their “political thoughts”

Although this is not stated explicitly by Peking University, 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 request, UCL stated of its Confucius Institute staff from China:

“All UCL IOE Confucius Institute [CI] staff are employed under UCL terms and conditions, and abide by English Law. The university has not entered into any agreements that demand otherwise. There are no staff sent from PRC working for UCL IOE CI on the UCL campus.”

¹ <https://archive.vn/WFGM2>

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”.

The UCL Confucius Institute's website states that one of its aims is to "to train teachers sent from China to support development work in [English] schools new to Chinese".