

### Central Lancashire University

The Confucius Institute at the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) was founded in 2008 as a partnership with Beijing International Studies University (BISU).

A post on the BISU website gives details of the recruitment process for staff at the UCLan Confucius Institute.<sup>1</sup> According to a Chinese-language form hosted on the webpage and reproduced and translated by UK-China Transparency, applicants must:

- Provide details of their “political characteristics” and “ethnicity”
- Provide details of three “main social connections” and each of these individuals’ contact details and “political characteristics”
- Promise that they are not a “member of any illegal organisations and do not participate in any activities that are detrimental to the national interests of China”
- Be evaluated by their managers on their “political thoughts”

“Illegal organisations” refers to social, religious and cultural groups banned by the CCP but whose beliefs and rights are protected under UK law, including but not limited to cultural and civil society groups representing the Tibetan, Uyghur, and Hong Kong communities, the Falun Gong, and religious groups associated with Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.

BISU 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 appears to be an attempt to deceive international partners about the nature of BISU’s recruitment processes.

Although this is not stated explicitly by BISU, 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

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

<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>

whereby CCP members pass information to their superiors: it mandates authoritarian practices such as peer surveillance, peer intimidation and informing.<sup>4</sup>

A renewal agreement signed in 2018 between UCLan and the Chinese government agency responsible for Confucius Institutes (then called Hanban) states:

“Chinese citizens involved in activities of the Institute shall be subject to the laws and policies of University of Central Lancashire and Britain.”

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, UCLan stated:

These individuals are not employed by the University but are engaged as contractors. They are in the UK on Tier 5 Government Authorised sponsorships, sponsored by the Centre for Language Exchange and Cooperation (formerly Hanban UK). We do not hold any further documentation that defines the legal status of these individuals. [...] We do not hold any record of having received legal advice on this topic.”

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<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”.