

Links between China and Russell Group universities

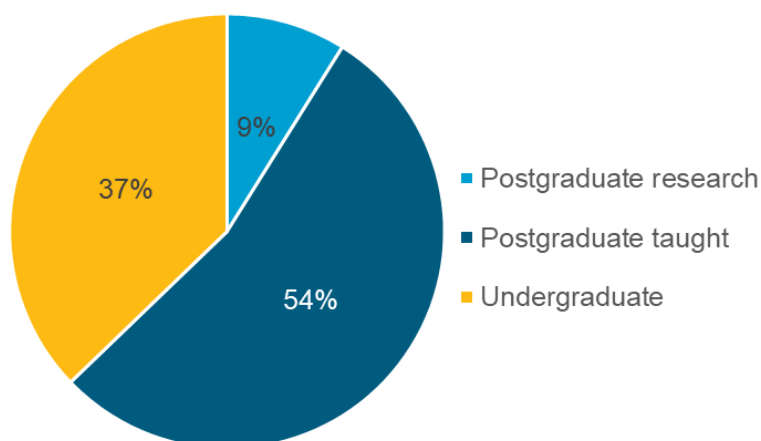
1. Research collaboration

- 1.1 China is one of the most important partners for the UK in terms of research, innovation and education. Of all the Newton Fund countries, it is the UK's second strongest research collaborator. The UK has now moved ahead of Japan to become the second most popular partner for Chinese researchers after the US¹.
- 1.2 All Russell Group universities have extensive links with China across different disciplines and areas of activity. These range from engagement between academics to large scale investments in branch campuses and joint research centres, involving academic and industrial partners. For example:
 - (a) The University of Liverpool and Xi'an Jiaotong University established the Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU) in 2006, which now hosts over 7,400 students. This is the largest international collaborative university in China.
 - (b) The University of Nottingham founded the first sino-foreign university in Ningbo (UNNC) in 2004. It has since signed a £25 million cooperative agreement in a Marine Research Centre, which will foster new collaborations with industry in China.
 - (c) The University of Cardiff and Beijing Normal University have established the Cardiff-Beijing Chinese Studies Joint College to offer dual degrees.
 - (d) The York-Nanjing Joint Centre for Spintronics and Nano Engineering combines research strengths of both institutions, attracting funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and Chinese businesses.
- 1.3 Many of our universities also disseminate information and undertake research on Chinese culture. For example, the University of Manchester is establishing a major centre for China studies, to improve mutual understanding in UK-China relations, and a Chinese culture gallery at the Manchester Museum. It is also one of twelve Russell Group universities that host a Confucius Institute, which aim to promote Chinese language and culture.
- 1.4 We want to ensure our members can continue to strengthen their links with partners in China, including universities, research institutes and businesses, for the mutual benefit of China and the UK. The Russell Group-China Collaborative Programme, announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in February 2014, aims to facilitate collaborations and has involved a series of collaborative workshops on key research themes including sustainable energy and low carbon, public health, sustainable cities, and Chinese financial reform and foreign direct investment.
- 1.5 In 2016, we took a delegation of Russell Group Vice-Chancellors to Shanghai for a dialogue with leaders from the China 9 (C9), an alliance of nine elite universities in mainland China. This delegation marked the signing of the Russell Group-C9 Statement, a commitment to:
 - Exploring ways to deepen engagement and strengthen existing relationships
 - Sharing information and approaches to addressing complex global challenges
 - Considering opportunities to further facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge.

¹ [International comparative performance of the UK research base 2016](#), a report prepared by Elsevier for the UK's Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy

2. Staff and student mobility

- 2.1 There are 2,650 Chinese staff at our universities, 87% are in academic roles. Most Chinese academics are supporting teaching and research in STEM disciplines, with 40% working in engineering and technology, 21% in biological, mathematical and physical sciences, and 18% in medicine, dentistry and health.
- 2.2 Chinese students make up the largest proportion, 26%, of all non-EU students studying at Russell Group universities. This number has grown in recent years: from 37,000 in 2012/13 to 47,000 in 2015/16 and early data from our members suggests this rate of growth is increasing: in 2017/18 there was a 20% increase in the number of Chinese students enrolling on courses at Russell Group universities compared to the previous year.
- 2.3 The most popular subjects studied by Chinese students at Russell Group universities are: business studies (33%), engineering and technology (17%), social studies (10%), mathematics (6%) and architecture (5%). More than half of Chinese students at Russell Group universities are enrolled on postgraduate taught courses².



- 2.4 Chinese students make a hugely valuable contribution, bringing new ideas and enriching the learning environment and diversity of our campuses. Their financial contribution ensures our universities can continue to deliver broad, high-quality academic programmes for all students. Chinese PhD students also bring new expertise to the UK and help strengthen partnerships between UK and Chinese universities.
- 2.5 Thanks to initiatives such as the Chinese Government Scholarship schemes and the British Council's Generation UK-China campaign, UK students have an increasing number of opportunities to study in China. Russell Group universities are promoting these opportunities and providing additional support for students to study in China and to learn about Chinese culture and language.
- 2.6 The Russell Group continues to work with the UK Government on issues such as visa and immigration policy and on schemes to encourage mobility between the UK and key partner countries overseas. We hope the UK's new £100 million Rutherford Fund will enable more Chinese researchers to spend time in the UK, strengthening research links between our countries.
- 2.7 UK Government's recent decision to expand the Tier 4 visa pilot means more Chinese masters students will be able to stay for up to six months after their course ends to gain work experience. We hope the UK Government will further expand its post-study work opportunities and ensure a streamlined process for student visas. Students from around the world should feel welcome and valued as students in the UK.

January 2018

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² 2015/16 HESA student data