



FWC FPI/PSF/2015

Lot 4: Rfs 2018/398182/1

*Improving EU Access to National and Regional
Financial Incentives for Innovation in China*

FOURTH AD HOC STUDY

*European researchers' mobility in
China: challenges and
opportunities*



This study was commissioned and financed by the European Commission. The views expressed herein are those of the Contractor and do not represent the official view of either the European Commission or the Delegation of the European Union to China.

Submitted by:

DEVELOPMENT Solutions Europe Ltd.

In cooperation with:

EURAXESS China

In consortium with:

- Copenhagen Economics A/S
- Cambridge Econometrics
- InterAnalysis Limited
- Campden BRI
- AINIA
- KGH Group
- Eurochambers

March 2019

DEVELOPMENT Solutions Europe Ltd.

Solutions for Sustainable Development

Headley Hill House, Tilley Lane,
Headley, KT18 6EP, Epsom,
United Kingdom

<http://development-solutions.eu>

About the project

As part of a monitoring of the effective implementation of the **EU-China Joint Roadmap on Ensuring Reciprocal Access to Respective Research and Innovation Funding**, in August 2018 the European Commission launched the project "*Improving EU Access to National and Regional Financial Incentives for Innovation in China*".

The action aims to increase the contribution of European enterprises, research structures and scientists to Chinese national and local funding programmes and incentives for science, technology and innovation; and to enhance EU-China cooperation through joint research and innovation initiatives. The action also provides factual evidence to the EU-China Innovation Cooperation Dialogue, as well as technical input to the EU efforts to improve the innovation framework conditions for European research and innovation stakeholders in China, by enhancing their access to financial funding incentives in China.

The project is funded by the **European Union**, and is implemented by **DEVELOPMENT Solutions Europe Ltd.**

www.chinainnovationfunding.eu

About DEVELOPMENT Solutions Europe Ltd.

DEVELOPMENT Solutions (DS) is a European consultancy with its primary focus on supporting EU external policies and cooperation strategies towards third countries, in particular strategic partner countries. DS designs and delivers projects in the areas of economic and trade policy and business internationalisation in support of sustainable development and sustainable investment objectives, world-wide. Our expertise is built on our strong grounding in project design and management, research, policy and regulatory analysis, and the management of capacity strengthening programmes.

www.development-solutions.eu



About EURAXESS China

EURAXESS China is a networking tool for European researchers active in China and for Chinese researchers wishing to collaborate and/or pursue a career in Europe. EURAXESS China provides information about research in Europe, European research policy, opportunities for research funding, for EU-China and international collaboration and for trans-national mobility. EURAXESS is an initiative of the European Commission.

Find more about EURAXESS China at china.euraxess.org.



Table of Contents

Executive summary	4
Recommendations to increase the mobility of European researchers in China	6
Survey on European researchers’ mobility in China	8
1) Non-effective integration within the Chinese scientific research community.....	9
2) Still burdensome, time-consuming immigration procedures and residence regulations.....	10
3) Awareness of funding opportunities and talent mobility incentives remains not optimal ...	11
4) Stiff selection criteria for European researchers to obtain funding opportunities and talent mobility incentives	11
5) Frustration for not being <i>always</i> allowed to write research proposals in English	12
6) Constraints in accessing data and information, both from <i>within</i> and <i>outside</i> China	13
Annex – List of active talent programmes targeting European researchers	14

Executive summary

Over the last decade, China established a wide range of programmes and schemes, both at the central and local level, aimed at recruiting overseas talents. Despite such efforts, which coincided with a period of substantial increase in the quality of Chinese universities and research structures, **China remains a non-attractive destination for European researchers**: a recent EU-funded study ranked China 16th amongst non-EU research destinations.¹ This has important implications on the mobility of European researchers to and within China.

This study illustrates the main challenges perceived and encountered by European researchers prior, during and after embarking on a position in China. It is based on the results of an **ad hoc survey** formulated by the project team in cooperation with EURAXESS China, to which 95 European researchers responded: 62% of respondents are established and leading researchers, and the remaining 38% are Ph.D. candidates and postdoc researchers; the vast majority of respondents (70%) has already stayed or plans to stay in China for at least 5 years.

Challenges perceived or encountered by European researchers in China

Six main challenges affecting the mobility and performance of European researchers in China emerged from the survey:

- 1) Non-effective integration within the Chinese scientific research community**, which is ranked by nearly two-thirds of respondents as one of the most significant barriers of mobility of European researchers to China. The survey reveals that major causal factors relate to problems with management mechanisms within Chinese institutions, lack of integration into the workplace's institutional culture, inaccessibility to leadership positions (which are often held by profiles lacking international experience). Though language and cultural barriers certainly play an important role, the fact remains that the majority of European researchers in China are recruited as 'international researchers' but face isolation when their institutions do not offer international environment.²
- 2) Still burdensome and time-consuming immigration procedures and residence regulations.** Despite recent progress, 'visa issues' ranked as the 4th most pressing issue affecting European researchers' mobility in China. The principal reasons indicated by respondents are:
 - Streamlined online applications for work permits are available only in a limited number of areas. Administrative personnel in many institutions are often unprepared about visa application procedures and requirements, resulting in application periods lasting several months.
 - Temporary residence permits are not issued for the entire duration of one's contract, but require annual renewal. Two- or three-year permits can be granted only after a few years of consecutive staying in China.
 - This also applies to spouses, who must either accept the type and form of employment guaranteed upon arrival to China, or not work at all (not even as volunteers or self-employed).
 - Talent visas and permanent residence permits (i.e. 'green cards') remain 'almost impossible' to obtain,³ though most researchers do not find these extremely vital for their career as they do not intend to stay in China forever.

¹ European Commission, *Survey on researchers outside of Europe - Annex to MORE3 study: support data collection and analysis concerning mobility patterns and career paths of researchers* (2017), Available at: https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/survey_on_researchers_outside_of_europe_0.pdf

² In interviews that EURAXESS China conducted with a focus group of European researchers in China, we find that examples of how the problems manifest themselves include: lack of upward mobility and future prospects; not being included in meetings and decision making that happens within the faculty; not being involved when requirements of their work is being deliberated; and not getting explanations for certain mechanism that affects their work.

³ It is noteworthy that according to China's State Administration of Foreign Experts' Affairs, Chinese green card remains "one of the most difficult documents to obtain anywhere in the world". Source: http://en.safea.gov.cn/2018-10/22/content_37113263.htm

- 3) Awareness of funding opportunities and talent mobility incentives remains not optimal,** mostly due to very scarce and outdated information available in English on one hand, and to the absence of awareness-raising activities (both *in* and *outside* China) on the other. Even if open programmes are known, the specific application procedures generally remain unclear.
- 66% of the survey respondents ranked 'scarcity of information on funding opportunities' as one of the top three challenges affecting their mobility in China.
 - More than one-fifth of European researchers in China are not aware at all of the existence of funding opportunities and mobility incentives prior to coming to China. This proportion increases in the case of researchers at early career stages.
- 4) Stiff selection criteria for European researchers to obtain funding opportunities and talent mobility incentives.** It is noteworthy that most respondents (61%) have never become beneficiaries of Chinese funding opportunities offered at any level of administration, and that 40% of respondents consider themselves not to be within the target range of selection criteria – which tend to be designed for the recruitment of:
- Chinese returnees over non-ethnic Chinese foreign researchers (26% of responses).
 - Researchers with a background in prestigious institutions (24% of responses).
 - Senior, well-established researchers over talented young researchers (21% of responses).
 - Researches engaged in natural sciences over those in social sciences (17% of responses).
 - First-comers over foreign researchers already established in China (7% of responses).
- 5) Frustration for not being *always* allowed to write research proposals in English, thus being in a disadvantaged position when applying to certain research grants.** Although some programmes (e.g. National Natural Science Fund) or a limited number of evaluation bodies accept English-written applications, this has not yet become a common and formal practice. In many cases, researchers need to hire a professional translator or translate the proposal themselves (or by assistants), resulting in precious time and resources not being dedicated to research.
- 6) Constraints in accessing data and information, both from *outside* and *from within* China.** While respondents fully understand the country's need for 'internet sovereignty', at the same time this has objective repercussions on one's ability to access research data and information from renowned global research databases and repositories (e.g. Google Scholar). On the other hand, several respondents (17%) argue that, despite some efforts by the central government, research data is not effectively shared within China, namely between researchers and between and institutions: this is even more the case for information in English language. This ultimately affects researchers' productivity and thus acts as an impediment for retaining talents for a long-term period.

Because these issues seriously affect China's attractiveness as a research destination for many European researchers, one inevitable consequence is that research experience in China and in Chinese institutions is often not seen as a strong asset for one's own career: **holding a position in China is perceived not to be as prestigious as in other countries**, mainly in Europe or in the United States. For this reason, around a dozen survey respondents complained about the **lack of return or reintegration schemes for European researchers in Europe after their staying in China** (beyond Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions⁴), leading quite a few respondents to explicitly recommended fellow European researchers "not to come to China at early career stages".

⁴ The **Marie Skłodowska-Curie** Actions (MSCA) contribute to excellent research, boosting jobs, growth and investment by equipping researchers with the new knowledge, skills and international and intersectoral exposure to fill the top positions of tomorrow and solve current and future societal challenges. The MSCA thrive by being open to all domains of research and innovation, chosen freely by the applicants in a fully bottom-up manner. For more information, see: <https://ec.europa.eu/research/mariecurieactions/>. One category of MSCA – i.e. Research & Innovation Staff Exchange (MSCA-RISE) – are also available for co-funding from the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology, under the **EU-China Co-Funding Mechanism**.

Recommendations to increase the mobility of European researchers in China

A set of concrete actions were recommended by survey respondents in order to **increase China's attractiveness as a research destination for European researchers**, and for all the international scientific community in general. These actions are mainly directed to the Chinese administration, although some of them could also be explored and promoted by the European Commission.

- 1) Facilitate and deepen the integration of international researchers, establish a real 'community of common destiny'**, for instance through the following practical ways:
 - ➔ Grant foreign faculty early access to the decision-making processes. Foreign talent should be encouraged and facilitated to participate in meetings and other non-research related activities of an institution, in order to ensure that final decisions take into account the needs of the international scientific community.
 - ➔ Increase the involvement of foreign researchers and experts in the evaluation committees of major national-level programmes (now still very low and limited to ethnic Chinese experts), or advisory boards. This is already a successful reality in many local areas, e.g. Shanghai where several international researchers (including Europeans) are members of the Shanghai Municipal Artificial Intelligence Strategy Advisory Expert Committee.
 - ➔ Consider allocating quotas for foreign researchers' representation in boards or management structures, especially in those institutions with significant numbers of foreign researchers.
 - ➔ Consider the design and organisation of some immersion or cultural programmes prior to or upon the arrival of the foreign talent to China, especially if the recruitment took place through government talent mobility schemes.

- 2) Further relax the requirements for temporary residence permits, talent and spouse visas**, for instance by:
 - ➔ Allowing residence permits to be issued for the entire duration of one's contract, rather than being renewed annually.
 - ➔ Relax the requirement of having had a work visa for the past 3-5 years in order to be eligible to apply for 2-year work visas.
 - ➔ Relax the requirement of having had a 2-year work visa for two consecutive years in order to be eligible to apply for 5-year work visas.

- 3) Increase the awareness of funding opportunities and mobility schemes for international researchers in China**, both amongst those who are in China already and those who are yet to relocate. This could be done, for instance, through:
 - ➔ Establishment of a unified website/platform where all national and local-level funding opportunities and incentive schemes available for foreign researchers are published – both in English and Chinese. Detailed application procedures should be included. The current website of the China Scholarship Council (which targets students, not researchers) represents a good reference model that could be replicated.
 - ➔ Partner with national ministries, universities and platforms in Europe (including the European Union Delegation to China and EURAXESS China) to organise events, trainings or tours on funding opportunities and mobility schemes available for European researchers – both in Europe and in China.
 - ➔ Increase the awareness of Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions in China, including their management, in order to encourage Chinese entities to offer more opportunities for European researchers in the country.

- 4) Further increase the focus of mobility and funding schemes to early-career, promising young talents.** Although many administrations have established ad hoc 'young scientist funds' exclusively supporting young PIs, funding granted by these remains very limited (generally not exceeding 100,000 – 200,000 RMB per project). Furthermore, although many funding programmes already include factors such as 'originality' and 'innovativeness' amongst the evaluation criteria, their definition, scope and actual weight remain vague. Finally, there currently is a strong emphasis

on researchers with a background in prestigious academic institutions and journal publications – mainly favouring the United States. European researchers, as well as those who are already in China, are significantly disadvantaged. Alternative criteria could be considered in exceptional cases when evaluating research proposals:

- ➔ Highly-talented young researchers with promising track record, who are often much more motivated in their activities and can devote larger parts of their career life in China – in contrast to senior researchers at late-career stages who often come to China mainly for a very attractive remuneration.
- ➔ Consider rewarding international researchers with proven interest and background in China, and with Chinese-language proficiency. Former foreign students of Chinese institutions are particularly valuable people to connect China with the world.

5) Expand and standardise the practice of accepting research proposals in English when applying for research funding and grants at all administrative levels, thus ensuring that precious time and resources are fully dedicated to research rather than administrative paperwork.

6) Increase support to international researchers to participate in international conferences or other exchange activities. The survey shows that, in many cases, internal approval procedures are excessively long and complicated, leading many European researchers to renounce in principle to apply for international travel and conferences. Full support to international researchers to participate in international events would increase the international visibility of China's research environment, thus directly strengthening the perception of it as an attractive research destination.

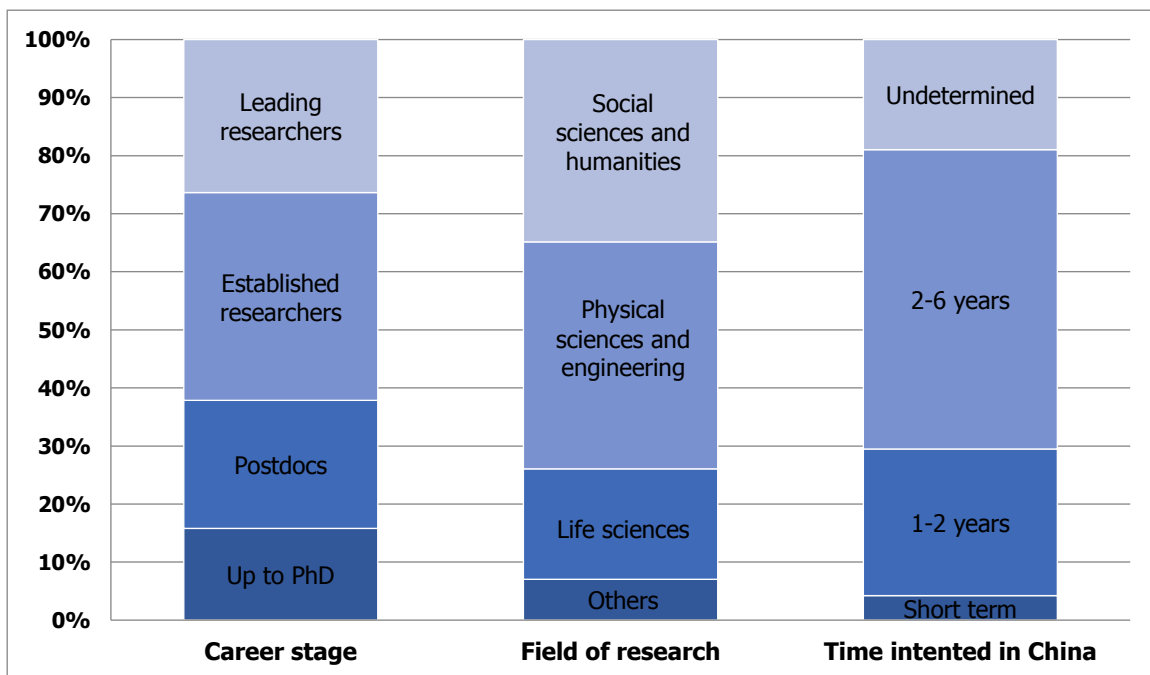
Finally, around a dozen of respondents have expressed the need for establishing **talent reintroduction mechanisms for European researchers going back to Europe**, as they often struggle to reintegrate in European universities and research institutes after a few years spent in China. This issue would, ideally, also cover currently existing difficulties for the transfer or withdrawal of pension and medical insurance contributions in China.

Survey on European researchers’ mobility in China

Over the last decade, in order to shift towards an economic model based on high value-added products, innovative services and home-grown technologies, China has dedicated an increasing amount of resources to introduce and retain highly-specialised talents. The recruitment of **overseas talents**, who act not only as carriers of knowledge, but also as valuable bridges between China and the rest of the world, has become central in both national and local sci-tech policies, with a wide network of mobility schemes and recruitment subsidies established at all levels of administration. These are generally very supportive to both research activities and to the researchers themselves, providing generous funding and high-level recognition. As a result, the number of foreign scientists accepting research positions in Chinese universities increases year by year.

Despite such efforts, **China remains a non-attractive destination for European researchers**: in the *MORE3 Global Survey (2017)* – which surveyed 417 European researchers currently working abroad – China ranked only 16th amongst the preferred non-EU research destinations (third in Asia, behind Japan and Singapore).⁵ Furthermore, retention rate is even lower: most foreign researchers come to China for limited periods (generally one to three years), with nearly no intention to settle permanently. This is due, at least partly, to major difficulties still existing in obtaining permanent residence: it is noteworthy that only 2,409 ‘green cards’ were granted to foreigners in the first half of 2018. Another important issue may relate to the fact that most Chinese talent recruitment programmes only support extended discontinued periods of work, such as up to 6 or 9 months per year over a 3- or 5-year period.

There is, therefore, large room for improvement in China’s talent attraction policies and schemes. Based on a **survey of European researchers in China** – structured on 14 basic open- and closed-ended questions which received 95 responses, followed by a more detailed qualitative part with 65 questions which received 36 responses – this study identifies six main challenges faced by European researchers in China. A series of recommendations to increase the mobility of European researchers in the country is then provided. The survey’s respondents are well distributed across different levels of seniority, fields of research, time spent (or to be spent) in China, and geographical location.

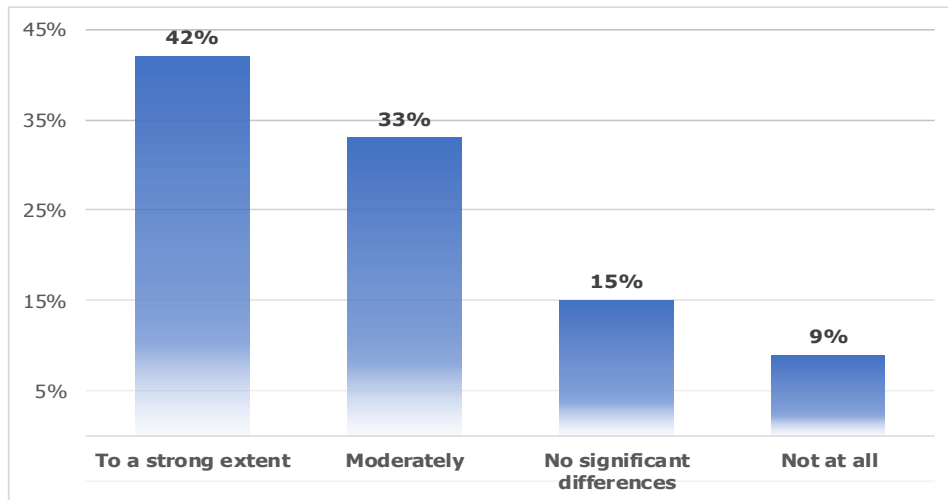


⁵ European Commission, *Survey on researchers outside of Europe - Annex to MORE3 study: support data collection and analysis concerning mobility patterns and career paths of researchers* (2017), Available at: https://cdn5.euraxess.org/sites/default/files/policy_library/survey_on_researchers_outside_of_europe_0.pdf

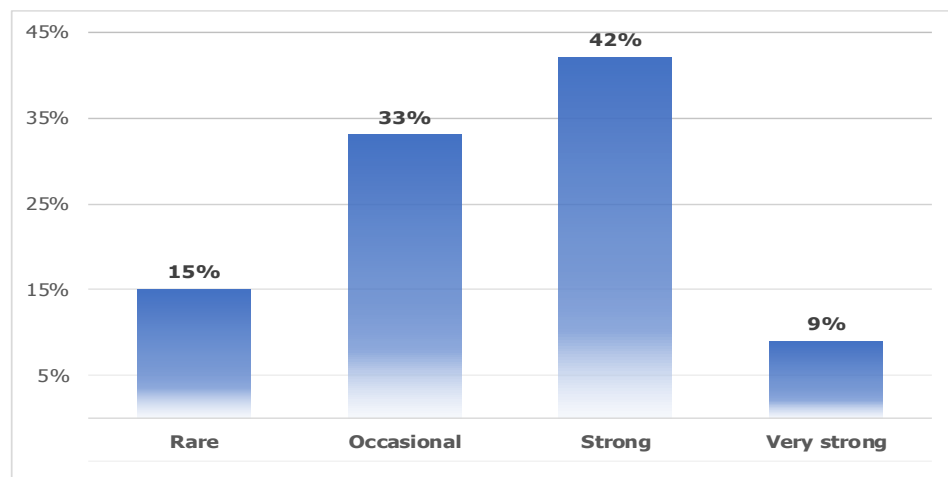
1) Non-effective integration within the Chinese scientific research community

'Difficulties to integrate' within the Chinese scientific community is ranked by 41% of respondents as the first issue affecting their mobility and long-term staying in China; or by 64% of respondents as one of the top three issues. In addition, three-fourths of respondents believe that their work responsibilities differ to some extent from those of their Chinese colleagues, while one out of two respondents does not have constant or frequent interaction or collaboration opportunities with fellow Chinese researchers.

Question 38 *According to your perception, to what extent do your work responsibilities differ from that of your Chinese colleagues?*



Question 39 *How would you rate your (opportunities for) interaction and collaboration with Chinese colleagues?*



While language and cultural barriers certainly play an important role – which could be mitigated by preparatory courses or cultural immersion programmes both before and after their arrival in China – other major factors resulting in lack of integration relate to lack of upward mobility, nearly absent participation in decision-making processes (even in cases when decisions directly affect the work activities of foreign researchers), and inaccessibility to certain top-level funding schemes and prestigious awards (e.g. the 'State Preminent Science and Technology Award' as well as the 'Ten Thousands Talents Plan').

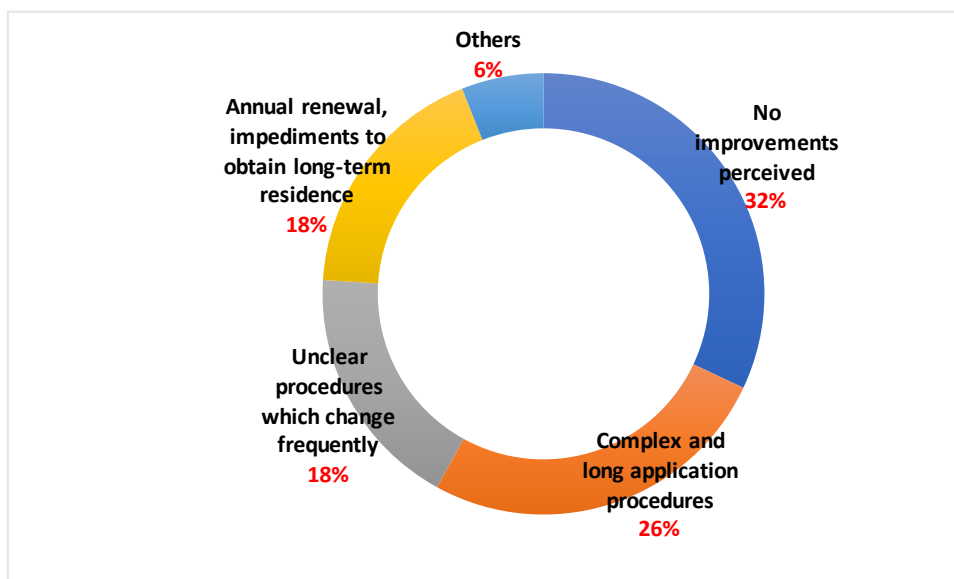
While some concrete actions could certainly be taken to address these issues, a few respondents suggest that these are the direct result of the **broader perception of foreigners within the Chinese academic community** – namely that of temporary visitors and contributors rather than full members of the academy community. As such, they are generally most welcomed at lower and intermediate management levels,

rather than at senior or advisory levels (*author's note: of course, there still are exceptions especially at the local level where there is evidence of foreign experts being included in local experts' pools or strategic advisory committees, e.g. in Shanghai*).

2) Still burdensome and time-consuming immigration procedures and residence regulations

In recent years significant progress has been achieved in streamlining procedures for work permits, and easing requirements for talent visas. 'Visa issues' remain amongst the top five most pressing concerns for 41% of European researchers in China, while the remaining part seems overall satisfied with new changes and regulations introduced.

Question 10 *If you ranked 'visa issues' as one of the main challenges affecting your mobility, what issues are you referring to in particular?*



Amongst those respondents who still rank 'visa issues' as a major factor affecting their mobility in China, in addition to a significant portion that has not perceived any actual change in practice, the largest issues relate to:

- Application procedures which remain complicated, time-consuming and often unpredictable, as they are subject to frequent changes also due to pilot reforms experimented only at the local level. It is noteworthy that the streamlined online pre-application system currently remains available only in certain municipalities. Training of administrative and human resource personnel responsible for visa applications could also be strengthened;
- Temporary residence permits which must be renewed annually, rather than being issued according to the duration of one's contract, as per common international practices. In many cases, renewal procedures (during which one cannot travel internationally) occur around the beginning of new academic years – which is a period when major international conferences generally take place. Furthermore, non-ethnic Chinese foreigners are also not eligible to apply for 5-year long residence permits (while those of Chinese ethnicity became eligible in February 2018).

Another visa-related issue highlighted in open-ended questions relates to **spouses**. Although most talent attraction programs guarantee a full-time job for researchers' spouses, there rarely is flexibility in case the spouse prefers other alternative types or forms of employment (e.g. self-employment or part-time): one has to either accept the post offered or not work at all, due to constraints with the residence permits.

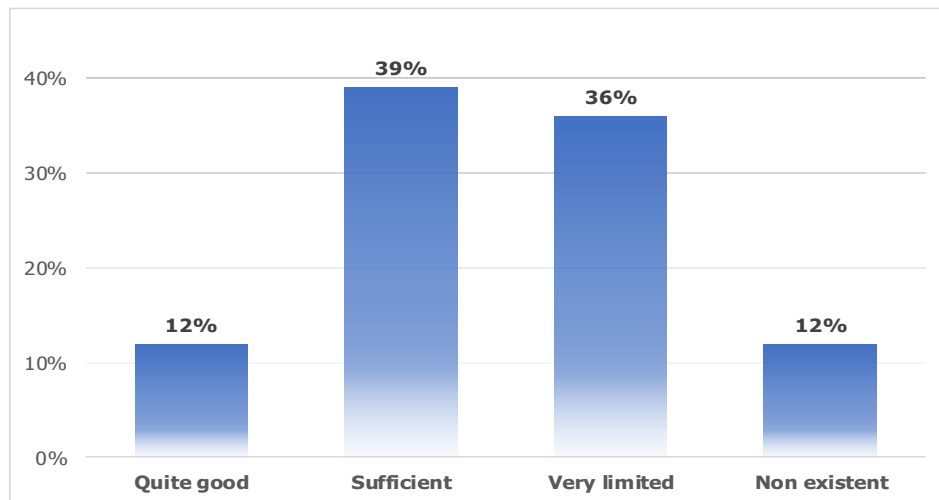
Finally, **permanent residence permits** remain very difficult to obtain – despite recent reforms. Most notably, requirements for 'talent visas' / green cards remain "prohibitively high", as one respondent

suggested. Inaccessibility to permanent residency does not only mean that one has to go through burdensome annual or bi-annual renewal procedures; it also complicates or even makes impossible to access to other public services, such as registering a vehicle or sending children to public schools in sought-after areas in top cities. This ultimately contributes to a very low retention rate.

3) Awareness of funding opportunities and talent mobility incentives remains not optimal

Information about funding opportunities and mobility schemes for international researchers coming to China is **not well disseminated, both within and outside China**. Practical and hands-on information on specific application procedures is not only difficult to find, but also often unclear, outdated and/or poorly translated (if translated at all). '*Scarcity of information on funding opportunities*' acts as a significant barrier for enhancing the mobility of international researchers in China, with 1 out of 2 survey respondents not satisfied with the information made available to them by their institutions. It is noteworthy that 22% of respondents were not even aware that mobility schemes exist – a figure that increases to 32% amongst Ph.D. and postdocs.

Question 44 *How do you evaluate the information for opportunities and applications for research funds provided to you (by your institution) in China?*

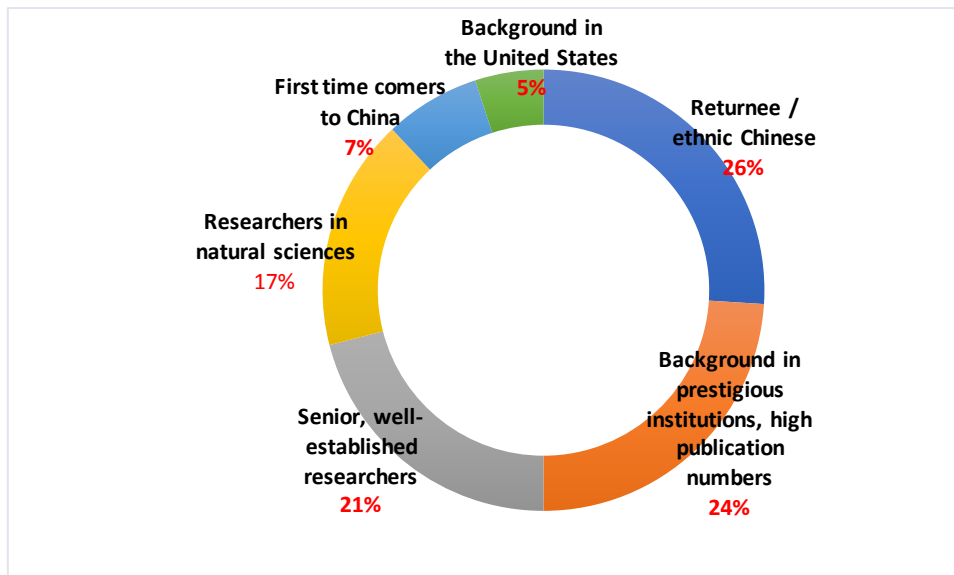


Finally, it must be noted that this does not only apply to information available in English; information in Chinese, although certainly more frequent, also remain overall fragment and unclear.

4) Stiff selection criteria for European researchers to obtain funding opportunities and talent mobility incentives

61% of survey respondents declare that they **have never become beneficiaries of mobility schemes or incentives in China**. Amongst these, 40% consider themselves to be outside of the target range of the selection criteria, with the main reasons being preference of:

- Chinese returnees over non-ethnic Chinese foreign researchers (26% of responses): while not formally making this distinction, it is a fact that many funding programmes and mobility schemes in China are directed towards Chinese returnees or foreigners with Chinese origins, as can be easily seen from the lists of selected talents which in most cases are published online. It is also a fact that foreigners with Chinese origins are eligible to apply to 5-year residence permits, while others are not.



- Researchers with a background in prestigious institutions and high numbers of publications (24% of responses): formal positions and titles, affiliation to top-ranked foreign universities and sheer quantity of articles published in high-impact journals are key evaluation criteria of Chinese funding schemes. While these are certainly important in academic research, they do not necessarily reflect quality, originality and relevance of one's proposed research.
- Senior, well-established researchers over talented, young researchers (21% of responses): the previous point also acts as a significant impediment for many highly-talented young researchers with solid research ideas from being selected in mobility or funding schemes. It is noteworthy that while nearly half of senior researchers surveyed has benefitted from funding, only one-third of Ph.D. students and postdocs has.
- Researches engaged in natural sciences over those in social sciences (17% of responses): indeed, 68% of survey respondents that have benefitted from mobility and funding schemes operate in natural sciences, while only 29% in social sciences and humanities. Interestingly, researchers in social sciences tend to rank 'visa issues' higher in the list of issues affecting their mobility in China. The number of currently existing mobility schemes for social sciences talents included in the annex of this study is extremely limited.
- First-comers over foreign researchers already established in China (7% of responses): as already mentioned in the first key challenge at the beginning of this study, it seems that little efforts are done to retain talents once introduced in the country – which may lead one to conclude that introducing foreign talents is a just a KPI for local administrations rather than a pure research-driven need. Paradoxically, foreign researchers with already a few years of academic practice in China and with more in-depth knowledge and contribution to the country's needs, may be in disadvantaged position compared to new comers when applying to funding.

5) Frustration for not being *always* allowed to write research proposals in English

Due to the need of very precise wording which also also be in line with Chinese values, in most cases it is **impossible for foreign researchers to submit research grant applications in Chinese**. Professional translations require additional time and resources, and often decrease the accuracy of the proposal.

While some existing programmes (e.g. the Research Fund for International Young Researchers under the National Natural Science Fund) and some evaluation bodies may accept proposals written in English, this is not a formalised practice adopted nation-wide. Experts involved in peer reviews are generally proficient in English, and therefore there are no major language barriers for the adoption of an application system in English language.

6) Constraints in accessing data and information, both from *within* and *outside* China

41% of survey respondents identify '*limited access to data and information*' as a **major obstacle to research productivity**. While they generally understand China's need for 'internet sovereignty', some respondents in open-ended comments argue that several websites "seem to be randomly flagged". This has objective repercussions on one's ability to access research data and information from renowned global research databases and repositories, and further accentuates a feeling of isolation from the global scientific community. Individuals may find ways to circumnavigate internet restrictions, but this often forces them into a grey legal area, involves financial costs, and slows down internet speed.

Furthermore, despite some recent efforts by the national administration to encourage data-sharing,⁶ 17% of respondents argue that **access to research data and information is also an issue *within* China**, that is inability to access research data produced in China by other Chinese institutions and researchers, mainly due to rigid data openness and data-sharing protocols. This is especially the case for certain fields such as social sciences or genetic studies. This issue significantly affects researchers' productivity as well as China's attractiveness as a research destination, and thus acts as an impediment for retaining talents for a long-term period.

Nearly the totality of survey respondents (82%) plan to return to Europe in the future. However, **reintegrating in the European academic community may prove challenging, especially for young researchers**. This is partly because academic communities in Europe and China remain not well-integrated – in fact, largely disconnected – to each other. China is still relatively isolated from the mainstream research arena, and most of China's top universities, journals and scientists remain largely unknown to the outside world. **A major consequence is that research positions in China are not seen as prestigiously as others in other countries, and they often do not constitute *the* critical asset in one's curriculum**. Especially young scientists in early career stages may find it difficult to establish themselves professionally in China and to build key academic relations. For this reason, a few respondents of the survey explicitly suggest to fellow European researchers "not to come to China at earlier career stages".

Finally, other points raised by survey respondents include difficulties and concerns regarding the transfer of pension and insurance contributions in China back to Europe; as well as overwhelming and rigid bureaucracy and paperwork for spending funding received through research grants.

⁶ For instance, several national-level funding programmes such as National Key R&D Programmes or Major Research Projects under the National Natural Science Fund, often explicitly specify that "applicants must agree to promote data-sharing" by uploading data on specific platforms designated by the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Annex – List of active Chinese programmes targeting European researchers

The following list includes mobility programmes targeting international scientists and researchers to conduct academic/scientific research in Chinese universities, research institutes, and laboratories, which were active as of March 2019. **It does not include those programmes which target talents for conducting research in Chinese enterprises,**⁷ nor those that appear to have ended by the time of writing (e.g. the Guangdong 'Pearl River' Talent Programme), or other general funding programmes not related to mobility (e.g. the National Natural Science Fund and the National Social Science Fund).

Furthermore, the list only includes programmes that **target foreign citizens, rather than Chinese returnees** (some programmes target both) – in view of the findings emerged from the survey in terms of preference often granted to the latter. A limited number of programmes included in the list also targets foreign experts who have *already* relocated to China – regardless if they did so thanks to mobility or recruitment schemes or not. These are more frequent at the local level (e.g. the Jiangsu 'Mass Innovation and Entrepreneurship' Talent Programme).

Programme
National High-end Foreign Experts Recruitment Plan
National Thousand Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)
Changjiang Scholars Programme – Chair Professors
Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) President's International Fellowship Initiative (PIFI)
China Postdoctoral International Exchange Programme
National Natural Science Fund – Research Fund for International Young Scientists
Confucius China Studies Programme
Chinese government scholarships
Beijing Overseas High-level Talent Recruitment Plan
Beijing International S&T Cooperation Programme – International Talent Exchange
Shanghai Municipal Thousand Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)
Jiangsu 'Mass Innovation and Entrepreneurship' Talent Programme
Nanjing '345' Overseas Talent Recruitment Programme
Suzhou S&T Development Plan – Innovation and Entrepreneurship Talent Programme
Zhejiang Provincial Thousand Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)
Hangzhou '115' Foreign Talent Recruitment Plan
Shenzhen Distinguished Talents – Subsidies for foreign academicians
Shenzhen Overseas Senior Talents Programme – Peacock Teams
Anhui Foreign Expert Hundred Talents Plan
Shaanxi Provincial Thousand Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)
Shandong 'Double Hundred' Foreign Expert Plan
Hubei Provincial Hundred Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)
Hunan Provincial Hundred Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)
Fujian Provincial Foreign Expert Hundred Talents Plan
Yunnan Provincial Foreign Expert Introduction Programme
Hong Kong Ph.D. Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS)

There are at least **four key issues** relating to these programmes:

- Most of these programmes are in the process of being concluded soon, likely by 2020. This is particularly the case of national- and local-level 'thousand talents plans' or 'hundred talents plans'. Similar programmes in other areas, in fact, already ended in 2017 and therefore have not been

⁷ Several of such programmes are available, such as the [Chongqing 'Swan Goose' Plan](#), a programme launched in 2017 offering significant cash incentives to foreign and overseas talents relocating to Chongqing-based enterprises; or the Chengdu 'Rong Piao' Talent Plan. A dedicated study will be formulated under the project in the next months.

included in this list (for instance, the Tianjin Municipal 1,000 Talents Plan – one category of which explicitly targeted foreign experts – ended in 2017; the 'Minjiang Scholar Programme' in Fujian province was implemented only from 2016 to 2018). New programmes are in any case expected to follow.

- There is only a very limited number of programmes supporting the mobility of researchers in the field of humanities and social sciences: the Confucius China Studies Programme, and general government scholarships.
- Applications are submitted by host/recruiting entities, rather than experts themselves. In limited cases, ad hoc job ads are published online. If not, interested candidates can any in case contact independently a potential recruiting entity in China (human resources / talent attraction offices) and enquiry on their support to candidatures for foreign expert programmes.
- Information available in English remain scarce and fragmented.

It must be noted that several **fellowships and job positions** are also available and published by individual universities or research institutes (see, for instance, [this page](#) from the institutes under the Chinese Academy of Sciences). In most cases, these offer competitive packages, also thanks to support and subsidies that they will receive from talent attraction policies sponsored by local governments.⁸ Individual universities and research institutes, in many cases, will also publish ad hoc calls for collecting sponsorship applications to national- or local-level talent attraction programmes (see, for instance, [this page](#) for candidates to be sponsored by the Zhejiang University).

Finally, **Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions** are also available for European researchers in China to support their return to Europe. For more information, including on open calls, see: <https://cdn1.euraxess.org/worldwide/china/marie-curie-individual-fellowships-call-open-2019>.

⁸ For instance, the Nanjing municipality offers substantial rewards to Nanjing-based scientists for **transferring, licensing, or outsourcing technology results** (including patents), thus generating income and contributing to local economic development. See [Implementation Measures for Technology Transfer Economic Contribution Rewards \(Trial\)](#) (in Chinese).

National High-end Foreign Experts Recruitment Plan

The '**High-end Foreign Experts Recruitment Plan**' is a programme launched for the first time in 2019 by the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), with the objective of introducing in China a batch of high-level foreign experts to contribute to the country's sci-tech innovation development in key priority fields. The Plan replaced a similar programme previously managed by the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs (SAFEA), which ceased to exist following its integration within MOST in March 2018.

Specific areas supported for recruitment:

In 2019, the High-end Foreign Experts Recruitment Plan will support the recruitment of four main categories of foreign experts:

- **Strategic technology development:** experts and teams involved in indigenous and pioneering research, development and innovation in key core technologies and with the capacity of solving major bottlenecks. This category of projects will receive the strongest support.
- **Industrial technology innovation:** technology experts involved in industrial upgrading and transformation, innovative design, and in implementing 'go global' expansion strategies. Priority will be granted to experts engaged in multinational operations and intercultural management, as well as those involved in strategic planning.
- **Social and ecological construction:** experts with solid experience in social and ecological construction, with the capabilities of pushing forward China's green and sustainable development especially in health, society, law and regulation, languages, cultural industries, and modern services.
- **Agriculture and rural revitalisation:** experts with solid experience in implementing successfully rural development and poverty-alleviation strategies, and who can introduce in China advanced foreign breeding varieties, technologies, production safety and testing technologies, and management models.

Requirements for experts:

At least one of the following conditions:

- Hold a post equivalent to associate professor in a globally-renowned foreign university or research institute
- Hold a senior management or senior technology position in an internationally-renowned enterprise or firm
- Entrepreneurs with indigenous IPR or mastering key core technologies
- Other high-level foreign experts and young experts urgently needed by the country.

Useful links:

[Official 2019 call for application](#) (in Chinese)

[Example of a recruitment ad published on Nanjing University's website](#) (in Chinese)

[2019 call for application](#) (unofficial announcement in English)

How to apply

Applications are submitted by the **recruiting entity** – which should be an enterprise, research structure or university registered and with legal personality in mainland China, non foreign-invested.

The entire application process goes through the recruiting entity.

Interested experts therefore are first required to reach a **preliminary agreement with a recruiter**. Many universities and research institutes may publish ad hoc job ads on their channels (each with its own application deadlines), though generally in Chinese language.

National Thousand Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)

China's **National Recruitment Plan of Global Experts**, commonly known as the Thousand Talents Plan, was established in 2008 with the purpose of recruiting high-level scientists and talents from overseas. It offers significant financial support to overseas experts who relocate to China for conducting research in high-tech industries or in new fields at the frontiers of science, or to participate in the country's major scientific programmes, key laboratories, state-owned enterprises, state-owned financial institutions, or high-tech development zones and industrial parks. The programme consists of several categories targeting a different pool of experts, including **one exclusively targeting foreign experts**.

The programme is however expected to end by 2020.

Eligibility requirements (foreign expert programme):

- Foreign nationals (including non-ethnic Chinese)
- Under 55 year's old
- Not already employed and working in China (or if so, the employment period should not exceed one year from the date of application). After selection, must work in the Chinese host institution full-time for at least 3 years
- Full professorship or an equivalent title in a prestigious foreign university or research institute; or senior technology or management position in a renowned international enterprise or financial institution

Age, academic and professional qualifications may be relaxed in case of extremely needed talents or in exceptional cases of outstanding performance.

Benefits:

The awardees will be granted preferential policies in terms of entry-exit immigration (including for their families), residence, medical insurance, housing, tax and salary. A lump sum of 1 million RMB of **research grants** will also be granted upon selection, together with 3 to 5 million RMB of additional research grants to experts conducting scientific basic research. Selected experts are often also encouraged to lead or to take part in other local or national government-funded programmes.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis – usually in May/June – on the 1,000 Talents Programme's [official website](#), as well as on the websites of other ministries.

Applications are **not submitted directly by applicants**, but from their respective Chinese recruiters (an employment agreement is therefore the first step required). In many cases, recruiters will publish ad hoc job ads on their channels for professorship or research positions specifically assigned through the 1,000 Talents Plan, each with earlier internal deadlines and eventually additional requirements relating to specific research fields, topics and specialisation. The application materials are collected by the host institution; after a pre-evaluation, it submits to the relevant authority for final evaluation and approval.

The application process generally takes several months.

Useful links:

[Official website](#) (in Chinese)

[Official website](#) (in English)

[Example of a recruitment ad published on University of Science and Technology of China's website](#) (in English)

[Factsheet on the project's website](#)

Changjiang Scholars Programme – Chair Professors

The **Changjiang (Yangtze River) Scholar** is the highest academic award that can be issued in China to an individual in higher education. Also known as the Cheung Kong Scholar, the programme is entirely managed by the Ministry of Education. It recognises China's domestic top scholars, who received the title of 'Changjiang Distinguished Professor' at their own academic institution, together with funding and grants. The programme differs from the [National Thousand Talents Plan](#) – which is directed towards the recruitment of top experts from abroad, and is administered by the CCCPC Organisational Committee. The programme is divided into three different categories – **one of which is also open to (non-ethnic Chinese) foreign professors: the Chair Professor programme.**

Eligibility requirements:

The Chair Professor programme is exclusively dedicated to high-level professors recruited by academic institutions in Central-Western China and North-eastern China. Candidates should meet the following requirements:

- Honest, trustworthy, devoted to science, with remarkable research integrity
- Senior university professor (or equivalent talent) in globally-renowned institutions
- Very renowned in the corresponding field, with academic accomplishments which have obtained wide international recognition
- Less than 55 years' old for professors in natural sciences or engineering; or 65 years' old for professors in philosophy or social sciences
- Commit to work in the Chinese host institution for at least 2 months per year

It is commonly believed that possession of exceptional global titles, awards or recognitions such as Nobel Prizes, or members or fellows of national science or engineering academies in developed countries, have higher chances of success.

Benefits:

Chair Professors are honoured with a guest or visiting professorship in the Chinese host university, with the prestigious title of 'Changjiang Scholar'.

In addition, a monthly stipend of around 30,000 RMB will be given (depending on the actual time spent working). Performance awards and additional funding and administrative support will be granted by the Ministry of Education, local governments, or the host institution itself. Public funding project proposals (at either local or national level) featuring Chair Professors as PIs are commonly perceived to yield higher chances of success.

Chair Professors will also be included and actively involved in relevant local and national-level experts' pools and advisory committees.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis on the Ministry of Education's website.

Applications are **not submitted directly by applicants**, but from their respective Chinese host institutions – which recommend a limited number of candidates every year. In many cases, Chinese host institutions will publish ad hoc job ads on their channels, each with its own internal deadlines and eventually additional requirements relating to specific research fields, topics and specialisation.

The application process generally takes several months.

Useful links:

[Management Measures of the Changjiang Scholar Programme](#) (in Chinese)

[Example of a recruitment ad published on the University of Science and Technology of China's website](#) (in English)

Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) President's International Fellowship Initiative (PIFI)

The Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) offers a package of international fellowships, collectively called the **CAS President's International Fellowship Initiative (PIFI)**, to support highly-qualified international scientists and postgraduate students to work and study at CAS institutions and strengthen their scientific collaboration with CAS researchers. The PIFI programme is available to different categories of international experts, researchers and students:

<p>Category A: Distinguished Experts</p> <p>Supports leading international scientists to conduct a lecture tour at CAS for 1-2 weeks, in at least two CAS institutes. Distinguished experts are also expected to host CAS postdoctoral researchers at CAS expenses at their lab for a research stay of 1-3 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits: 50,000 RMB per week, plus all expenses covered ▪ Requirements: Well-renowned experts globally, winners of international awards or honours 	<p>Category B: Visiting Scientists</p> <p>Supports leading international scientists to implement cooperative projects at CAS institutions for 2-9 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits: 20,000 / 30,000 / 40,000 RMB per month for assistant, associate or full professorship, plus other subsidies to cover living and travel expenses ▪ Requirements: Title of assistant professor (or above); outstanding scientific records; 5+ years' experience in renowned universities; and has a collaborative research plan with a CAS 	<p>Category C: Postdoctoral Researchers</p> <p>Supports promising young international scientists to conduct research at CAS-affiliated institutions for 1-2 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits: 250,000 RMB per year, plus subsidy for travel expenses ▪ Requirements: Ph.D. degree in natural or technological sciences; under 40 years' old; recommended by a CAS host researcher; and does not have other commitments
<p>How to apply: Applicants must first find a CAS host researcher. An efficient online database is available to assist with the search. A research proposal must then be formulated. Official PIFI applications are then submitted by the host researcher/institute, from early August to mid-September.</p>		
<p>Category D: Special Experts</p> <p>Supports experts with particular skills and capacities to work full-time in CAS-affiliated institutions for 2-3 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits: 60% of the contract amount covered by PIFI, and the remaining by the CAS host institute ▪ Requirements: Foreign personnel who can undertake long-term and full-time employment for CAS, and who meet the specific needs of the special post 	<p>Category F: Ph.D. Students</p> <p>Supports around 200 international graduates each year to pursue their Ph.D. degrees at the UCAS or USTC. They will take regular training courses at UCAS/USTC for about a year and carry out research and dissertation at CAS institutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits: monthly stipend of 7,000 to 8,000 RMB, tuition fee waivers, travel and visa support ▪ Requirements: Master's degree; under 35 years' old; meets the admission requirements of UCAS or USTC; and does not have other commitments 	<p>Category G: Master's Students</p> <p>Supports around international undergraduates each year to take specialised 1-year courses at UCAS or USTC. They will carry out research and dissertation at CAS institutes, for a maximum of 3 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits: monthly stipend of 4,000 RMB, plus tuition fee waivers ▪ Requirements: Bachelor's degree; under 30 years' old; recommended by a supervisor and his/her related CAS institute; and meets the admission requirements of UCAS or USTC
<p>Applicants for the Category D - Special Experts must respond directly to specific job advertisements published on a dedicated section of CAS website.</p>	<p>How to apply: Applicants must follow the application procedures indicated on the websites of UCAS or USTC.</p>	

Useful links: [Official website](#) (in English); [Database of CAST host researchers and supervisors](#). *Note: in some cases, individual CAS institutes may also published ad hoc calls for annual PIFI applications (see e.g. [this call](#) from the CAS Institut Pasteur Shanghai).*

China Postdoctoral International Exchange Programme

The **Postdoctoral International Exchange Programme** is targeted at exceptional international young scientists (including those from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, as well as fresh Chinese Ph.Ds. who have not yet returned to China) pursuing postdoctoral research in Chinese postdoc stations. The research period lasts two years, at least 20 months of which must be in China. Remuneration and allowances for housing, living expenses, social insurance and international travel expenses are provided to successful candidates, around 200-300 every year.

Eligibility requirements:

- Under 35 year's old, in good health
- Foreign national (or Chinese from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, or fresh Chinese Ph.Ds. who have not yet returned to China) who has obtained a Ph.D. degree in the last three years. The Ph.D. degree should meet one of the following conditions:
 - Obtained from an institution in the Global Top 100 University List, or from a department/faculty ranking in the Top 100 Discipline List (*note: based on the annual rankings done by the [Shanghai's Academic Ranking of World Universities](#); the [Times Higher Education World University Ranking](#); the [QS World University Rankings](#); or the [US News & World Report University Ranking](#)).*
 - Obtained from one of the top 3 universities in one of the Belt and Road countries.
 - Obtained from German universities and formally recommended by the Helmholtz Association.
- Official recommendation from a Chinese host institution/postdoc station
- Excellent academic record, good English and/or Chinese language proficiency
- Has never received other funding from the Office of China Postdoc Council or other postdoc supporting programmes

How to apply

Applicants must contact one of the over 4,000 research institutions in China with an in-house postdoc station (link at the end). After **an agreement is reached with the potential host**, the applicant fills an online application form and send it to the Chinese host institution. Support with Chinese language will be required throughout the process.

If the applicant passes a first international evaluation of the host institution, his/her application materials are submitted to the Office of China Postdoc Council for final evaluation and approval.

Applications from the applicants to their respective host institutions can be **submitted at any time of the year** (many institutions have their own job ads on their channels). The Office of China Postdoc Council, however, evaluates applications forwarded to them from host institutions only three times per year, in March, June and September.

Note: different host institutions may apply their own internal requirements for applicants, especially in terms of research topics and areas supported.

Useful links:

[Official 2019 call for application](#) (in Chinese)

[Official 2019 call for application](#) (in English)

[Example of a recruitment ad published on Beijing Jiaotong University's website](#) (in English)

[List of existing Chinese postdoc stations](#) (in Chinese)

National Natural Science Fund – Research Fund for International Young Scientists

The **Research Fund for International Young Scientists** is one category of programmes supported every year by the National Natural Science Fund. It is exclusively oriented to designed to encourage excellent **international young scientists** based abroad to come to mainland China to conduct basic research in natural sciences. The aim is to promote sustainable academic collaboration and exchanges between Chinese scholars and foreign young scientists.

Eligibility requirements:

- Foreign citizenship
- Less than 40 year's old
- Possession of Ph.D. degree
- Previous experience in conducting basic research or postdoctoral research
- Has already signed a cooperation agreement with a host institution in China
- Work full-time in the Chinese host institutions during the entire project duration
- Abide by Chinese laws and relevant NSFC regulations while doing research in China

Annual calls for applications:

New calls for applications are published **every year** in the NSFC annual project guidelines (in Chinese). An English version of the guidelines is also usually published (see link below for latest guidelines in 2019).

Applicants are encouraged to submit explorative research proposals on any topics in all the areas of science, engineering and health research generally covered by the National Natural Science Fund. Every year, an average of 200k to 400k RMB is allocated for around 150 projects lasting 1 to 2 years.

Evaluation criteria:

Research proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

How to apply

Applicants must first contact a host institution in China, and sign a **written cooperation agreement**. The host institution will then generate an official account number and password for the applicant to log-in on the [relevant application platform](#) – which unlike most other programmes in China is available in English. Application forms can be submitted in English.

In addition to filling the research proposal, the following materials must also be submitted as part of the application materials:

- Signed agreement between the applicant and the host institution in China
- Notarised copy of the applicant's PhD degree
- The first page of max. five publications written by the applicant

- The applicant's education background and his/her ability to conduct basic research
- The applicant's career records and achievements in conducting basic research
- The originality, scientific value and expected outcomes of the proposed research
- The feasibility of the proposed research plan and rationality of the budget

Besides, it is commonly agreed that the more the research topic is in line with Chinese national or regional needs and values, the higher the chances of being approved will be.

Useful links:

[Official 2019 call for application](#) (in English)

[Factsheet on the project's website](#)

Confucius China Studies Programme

The **Confucius China Studies Programme**, established by the Office of Chinese Language Council International (i.e. Hanban), is specifically oriented to excellent foreign researchers and talents in China-related doctoral studies. It is the only active Chinese programme supporting researchers' mobility in social sciences (in addition to various government scholarship provided by the China Scholarship Council or Confucius Institutes for Chinese language studies). The programme is open on an annual basis, and is divided into several categories, including:

<p>Joint Research Ph.D. Fellowship</p> <p>Supporting Ph.D. candidates in foreign universities to come to China for a six months to two years period for further studies, research, or writing of their Ph.D. dissertations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits: 80,000 RMB/year of living allowance; 20,000 RMB/year of research fund; round-trip flight; tuition; other support from universities ▪ Requirements: HSK 3 or higher; Ph.D. enrolled in a foreign university 	<p>Ph.D. in China Fellowship</p> <p>Supporting foreign students to pursue full-time Ph.D. degrees in Chinese universities, in humanities and social sciences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits: 80,000 RMB/year of living allowance; 20,000 RMB/year of research fund; round-trip flight; tuition; other support from universities ▪ Requirements: HSK 5 or higher; Master's Degree
<p>How to apply: new calls for application are published every year in October-November. The deadline for submitting applications is usually in February the following year. Applications are submitted online on the official website of the programme; hard copy materials will need to be shipped to Hanban's headquarters. Applicants are generally required to have reached a prior agreement with a Chinese Ph.D. supervisor: lists of available supervisors are included in annual calls.</p>	
<p>Understanding China Fellowship</p> <p>Supporting assistant professors from foreign universities and academic institutes to conduct joint research in leading Chinese universities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits: 10,000 RMB per month; round-trip flight ▪ Requirements: assistant professor (or higher) in foreign universities and academic institute <p>A short-term programme is also available for senior government officials, or experts from education, culture, and NGOs.</p>	<p>Young Leaders Fellowship</p> <p>Supporting outstanding young talents with a Bachelor's Degree (or above) and holding a certain position in the field of politics, economics, finance, law, education, culture, arts, and media, to visit China for a short-term period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits: accommodation and travel expenses; round-trip flight ▪ Requirements: less than 40 years' old; involved in public affairs
<p>How to apply: Applications can be submitted at any time of the year via e-mail to the address indicated in the official website.</p>	

Other grants or financial support are available for foreign scholars publishing articles or founding academic journals on sinology and/or China studies, or organising international conferences and seminars in China.

Note: applicants who are already receiving support from Chinese government scholarship are generally not eligible to apply.

Useful links:

[Official website of the Confucius China Studies Programme](#)

Chinese government scholarships

In order to promote mutual understanding, cooperation and exchanges in various fields between China and other countries, the Chinese central government has set up a series of **scholarship programmes** to sponsor international students, teachers and scholars to study and conduct research in Chinese universities. The China Scholarship Council (CSC), a not-for-profit institution under the Ministry of Education, is responsible for the enrolment and the administration of different scholarships.

Different scholarship programmes exist. Those relevant for European researchers are the following:

- **Bilateral Programme:** Providing full or partial scholarships to study or conduct research in Chinese universities, to undergraduate and graduate students, as well as to general scholars and senior scholars from countries which have signed an official cooperation agreement with the Chinese Ministry of Education. Applications are organised by the dispatching authorities in the foreign country.
- **Chinese University Programme:** Providing full scholarships to excellent graduate and Ph.D. students to conduct studies in designated Chinese universities and certain provincial education offices. Applications are submitted every year, generally between January and April, directly to the Chinese host institutions.
- **Great Wall Programme:** Providing full scholarships for UNESCO to sponsor students and scholars in developing countries to study and conduct research in China. Applications are organised and submitted to the National Commission for UNESCO in the foreign country.
- **EU Programme:** Providing full or partial scholarships to study or conduct research in Chinese universities, to undergraduate and graduate students, as well as to general scholars and senior scholars from EU Member States. Applications are submitted every year, generally in the first quarter, to the [Education and Culture of the PRC Mission to the European Union](#).
- **World Meteorological Organisation Programme:** Providing partial scholarships for WMO to sponsor international undergraduate, master and doctoral students to study and conduct research in China in the field of meteorology, hydrology, and water resources monitoring and management.

In addition, various **administrations at the local level** – both municipal and provincial – have also established ad hoc scholarships for international students to complete their bachelor, master or doctoral studies in specific local universities. These basically cover all Chinese regions. A full list of local government scholarships available can be found in the link below.

Eligibility requirements:

Eligibility requirements vary from programme to programme, and also depending on the typology of applicant (undergraduate, Ph.D., senior scholar, etc.), but always require applicants to be citizens of foreign countries.

Note: other scholarships are also made available by Confucius Institutes worldwide, but generally support studies in Chinese language.

Useful links:

[Official website of the CSC's scholarship programmes](#) (in English)

[List of local government scholarships available – 1](#) (in English)

[List of local government scholarships available – 2](#) (in English)

Beijing Overseas High-level Talent Recruitment Plan

**** Note: the last call for this programme was published in 2017. It is not clear if the programme has ended or if other calls / similar programmes will be launched in the future ****

The **Beijing Overseas High-level Talent Recruitment Plan**, established and managed by the Beijing Municipal Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, features one specific programme explicitly targeting the recruitment of non-ethnic Chinese foreign experts in Beijing – either long-term or short-term.

Eligibility requirements:

- Non-ethnic Chinese foreign nationals, and should have already signed an official labour contract or agreement with the recruiting entity
- Generally, under 65 years' old
- Commit to work in China for at least 3 consecutive years after being selected, for at least 3 or 6 months per year (short-term or long-term)
- Possess Ph.D. degrees obtained abroad
- Possess one of the following conditions:
 - Hold a job title equivalent to associate professor or researcher in a foreign renowned university or research structure;
 - Hold a job title equivalent to senior technologist in international renowned enterprises, financial institutions or law firms;
 - Hold a mid-senior management position in international organisations, foreign government entities, or renowned not-for-profit organisations;
 - Previous experience in implementing international large-scale research or engineering projects;
 - Possess IPR or master core technologies in Beijing's key development industries and sectors;
 - Outstanding post-doc researchers with excellent prospects of growth.

Benefits:

Different types of benefits are associated with the programme, including 1 million RMB of funding, plus administrative, housing and living support. Recruited experts are also expected to receive significant support in applying to and implementing other municipal or national level funding programmes.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis on the website of the [Beijing Overseas Talents Network](#).

Applications must be submitted by the host recruiting institution, which should be a municipal-owned organisation, a private enterprise or social organisation (including S&T parks) established within Beijing's districts and S&T parks, established for over 1 year with a registered capital of at least 1 million RMB.

Note: the last call for the Beijing Overseas High-level Talent Recruitment Plan was published in 2017. It is not clear if the programme has ended or if other calls / similar programmes will be launched in the future.

Useful links:

[Latest call for application in 2017 \(in Chinese\)](#)

Beijing International S&T Cooperation Programme – International Talent Exchange

In order to accelerate the establishment of Beijing as a global innovation centre, the Beijing Municipal Science and Technology Commission has established the **Beijing International S&T Cooperation Programme** – a dedicated programme promoting and supporting international cooperation in science and technology. The programme is further divided into different categories: the '**International Talent Exchange**' category aims to step up the mobility of domestic and international talents in China and abroad, by providing living support of up to 100,000 RMB for foreign scientists coming to Beijing for conducting 3-12 months of scientific research, or Chinese scientists going abroad for the same purpose and duration.

Eligibility requirements:

- Under 55 years' old
- At least 5 years' work experience in conducting scientific research; or possession of Ph.D. degree
- Good English proficiency; Chinese proficiency will be considered as a strong asset
- Commitment to work full-time in China for the designated period, abiding by local laws and regulations

Supported sectors in which the recruited talent should operate are: new generation ICT; integrated circuits; medical and healthcare; intelligent equipment; energy-saving and environment technologies; new energy intelligent vehicles; new materials; artificial intelligence; software; S&T services.

Foreign scientists from countries officially participating in the Belt and Road Initiative will be particularly prioritised.

Useful links:

[Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese)

[Results of the latest call in 2018](#) (in Chinese)

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis on the website of the [Beijing Municipal S&T Commission](#).

Applications must be submitted by the host recruiting institution, which should be an university or research structure (or enterprise) with independent legal personality in Beijing, and with good credit records in line with relevant local regulations.

Shanghai Municipal Thousand Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)

The Shanghai municipality has established its own localised version of the National 1,000 Talents Plan. The **Shanghai Municipal 1,000 Talents Plan** offers significant financial support to high-level overseas scientists and experts who decide to relocate to Shanghai for conducting research in high-tech industries or in new fields at the frontiers of science, or to participate in the country's major scientific, engineering and innovative programmes, key laboratories, or in the financial and transportation sectors. Similarly to its national-level counterpart, the Shanghai 1,000 Talents Plan is divided into different categories, one of which **exclusively targeting foreign experts**.

It is expected that the programme will end by 2020.

Eligibility requirements (foreign expert programme):

- Foreign nationals (including non-ethnic Chinese)
- Under 65 years' old
- Committed to be based in Shanghai for at least 9 months per year for 3 consecutive years
- Full professorship or an equivalent title in a prestigious foreign university or research institute; or senior technology or management position in a renowned international enterprise or financial institution

Benefits:

The awardees will be conferred the title of 'Shanghai Distinguished Expert', and will be mainly granted substantial benefits and financial assistance in terms of working and living conditions, priority when applying to national and local-level R&D programmes and megaprojects, etc.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis – usually in the summer – on the [Shanghai International Talent website](#).

The application and selection procedure is similar to that of the [national-level 1,000 Talents Plan](#). Applications must be submitted by the host recruiting institution, which should be an university or research structure (or enterprise) with independent legal personality in Shanghai, and with good credit records in line with relevant local regulations.

A key prerequisite for each interested applicant is to first have an employment agreement with the Shanghai-based host institution. In many cases, host institutions will publish ad hoc job ads on their official channels for professorship or research positions specifically assigned through the municipal 1,000 Talents Plan, with earlier internal deadlines. Additional requirements relating to specific research fields, topics and specialisations may also be requested by single host institutions.

Useful links:

[Shanghai International Talent website](#)

[Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese)

Jiangsu 'Mass Innovation and Entrepreneurship' Talent Programme

Established in 2007, the **Jiangsu 'Mass Innovation and Entrepreneurship' Talent Programme** (or *shuangchuang*) provides financial support every year to hundreds of high-level innovation and entrepreneurship returnees or foreign talents (including non-ethnic Chinese), who have returned or moved to Jiangsu province for conducting research or start businesses in key industries, particularly: ICT, high-end software, biotechnologies, pharmaceuticals, new materials, high-end manufacturing, environment-friendly technologies, new energies, internet of things, aerospace and marine equipment, and digital industries. The programme is divided into different categories, two of which feature relatively fair levels of **participation from (non-ethnic Chinese) foreign talents**:

- *Shuangchuang* talents: individual talents engaging in entrepreneurship, or conducting innovation activities in enterprises, universities, research structures, or involving health, culture, or high-technologies.
- *Shuangchuang* teams: teams engaging in innovation/entrepreneurship in science and technology, strategic emerging industries, software and internet, education, modern agriculture, service outsourcing, health, or winners of Nobel prizes, winners of the [national 1,000 Talents Plan](#), or foreign academicians.

Eligibility requirements:

- Master's degree
- Should have already returned or moved to Jiangsu, and should remain within the province generally for 3 to 5 years
- Under 55 or 65 years' old
- Winners of the national level 1,000 Talents Plan or other provincial-level talent programmes are only eligible for the *Shuangchuang* teams category.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis – usually in April – on the website of the Jiangsu Provincial S&T Department, as well as on the websites of individual universities and research institutes in Jiangsu.

Applications are submitted by the applicants themselves, although official approval and recommendation from their Jiangsu-based host institutions must be submitted as part of the application materials.

Benefits:

- *Shuangchuang* talents: 500,000 to 3 million RMB granted over a three-year period (at least 30% of which for living allowance)
- *Shuangchuang* teams: 3 to 30 million RMB for the project for which the team has been recruited, plus additional 3 to 8 million RMB granted over a three-year period to the team (at least 30% of which for living allowance)

Useful links:

[Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese)

[Results of the latest call in 2018](#) (in Chinese)

Nanjing '345' Overseas Talent Recruitment Programme

The **Nanjing Municipal '345' Overseas Talent Recruitment Programme** was established to recruit high-level innovation and entrepreneurship returnees or foreign talents in Nanjing. The Programme offers substantial subsidies, rewards and administrative support to both the recruiting entity and the talent. The Programme targets three different types of recruitment:

- '3' – urgently needed foreign experts (referred to as '3 Plan')
- '4' – overseas high-level innovation teams (referred to as '4 Plan') → For enterprises only
- '5' – overseas expert studio soft recruitment (referred to as '5 Plan')

Category	Eligibility requirements (for talents)	Eligibility requirements (for recruiting entity)
'3 Plan' – Urgently needed foreign experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foreign citizenship and Ph.D. Degree ▪ Max 65 years' old (exceptions can be made depending on health) ▪ Has not been working in Nanjing for more than 1 year ▪ Committed to work in Nanjing for at least 3 consecutive years (at least 6 months/year) ▪ Plus one of the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classified as 'Category C Talent' based on the Nanjing Talent Accommodation Method Catalogue - Previous experience in foreign renowned academic institutions or research structures as professor (or equivalent); or as senior manager/technologist in foreign renowned enterprises or financial institutions - Possession of advanced technology levels and IPR, with good market and commercialisation prospects, especially in local priority industries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Academic institution, research structure, or medical structure with legal personality and social insurance in Nanjing ▪ Enterprise or R&D structure with Chinese majority
'5 Plan' – Overseas expert soft recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 'Soft recruitment' (i.e. not altering the formal relationship of the talent with his/her overseas employer) for R&D, tech development, commercialisation, or application projects ▪ Recruited for at least 10 person-times annually, with cumulative annual working time in Nanjing of at least 6 months ▪ Priority for talents and projects in line with local priority industries (according to the Opinions on Accelerating the Optimisation and Upgrading of Main Industries in Nanjing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Academic institution, research structure, or medical structure with legal personality and social insurance in Nanjing ▪ Enterprise or R&D structure with Chinese majority

Benefits:

- Financial support to recruiting entities (up to 600,000 RMB per year to support the talent's stipend)
- Up to 5 million RMB of project support; travel and accommodation subsidies
- Particular endorsement to recruited talents in [national '1,000 Talents Plan'](#), the [Jiangsu Provincial 'Mass Innovation and Entrepreneurship' Plan](#), as well as special recognitions and friendship awards from both the provincial and central government
- Administrative, housing and living support to recruited talents, including 5-year residence permits, medical insurance, schooling for children, Nanjing Citizen Card (A Card), etc.

Useful links:

- [Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese)

How to apply

Calls are published on an annual basis, usually between March and May, on the website of the [Nanjing Municipal People's Government](#) or on that of the [Nanjing Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau](#).

Applications must be submitted by the recruiting entity to district level bureaus of human resources and social security.

Suzhou S&T Development Plan – Innovation and Entrepreneurship Talent Programme

The **Suzhou S&T Development Plan – Innovation and Entrepreneurship Talent Programme**, was launched by the Suzhou Municipal S&T Bureau to support high-level innovation and entrepreneurship talents and teams to relocate to Suzhou for their activities. The programme targets different categories of talents/teams:

- *Major innovation teams: supporting teams which have already achieved major results or technologies in their field, and with strong capabilities for innovation and commercialisation*
- *Entrepreneurship leading talent (teams) → For entrepreneurs only*
- *Innovation leading talents: supporting high-level talents to conduct innovation activities within Suzhou-based (i) academic institutions/research structures; or (ii) enterprises*

Category	Eligibility requirements (for talents)	Benefits
Major innovation teams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rational composition and division of labour amongst the team leader (60 years' old) and core team members (generally 5+ members, max 55 years' old, with Ph.D. degree) ▪ Required to have stable cooperation for at least 3 years ▪ Team leader should be an internationally-renowned expert in the corresponding field, with advanced research skills and results ▪ In the last 3 years, relocated full-time to Suzhou-based academic institutions, research structures, or enterprises (or founded a company, with the team leader being the main founder) ▪ Project-related investment (or accumulate sales revenue) should exceed 100 million RMB within 3 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 to 50 million RMB of project-related support over 3 years to teams ▪ 1 million RMB to the recruiting academic institution/research structure
Innovation leading talents	<p>Innovation leading talents in universities/research structures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The recruiting institution should be registered in Suzhou ▪ The talent should have been awarded the 1,000 Talents Plan <p>Innovation leading talents in enterprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ph.D. degree, max 55 years of age ▪ At least 5 years of experience in a key post in a domestic or international enterprise/institution/research structure, with possession of core technology results ▪ Required to work full-time in the recruiting enterprise, for at least 3 years 	<p>For talents in universities / research structures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 500,000 to 1 million RMB of project-related support <p>For talents in enterprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 - 4 million RMB of project-related support ▪ 1 - 2.5 million RMB of housing support ▪ 300,000 - 500,000 RMB to the recruiting enterprise
<p>How to apply: Calls are published on an annual basis on the website of the Suzhou Municipal S&T Bureau – usually in March. Applications must be submitted by the recruiting entity. Applications usually can be submitted into two different batches: the first within 2-3 weeks from the date of publishing of the call; the second in the second half of the year.</p>		

Particular **priority** is granted to talents/teams recruited in the areas of: strategic and emerging industries (nanotechnologies, high-end machinery, intelligent manufacturing, new materials, new energy, green technologies, biology and medical devices, ICT); technology services; and modern agriculture.

Useful links:

- [Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese)
- [Results of the latest call in 2018](#) (in Chinese), for the 'major innovation teams' category.

Zhejiang Provincial Thousand Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)

The Zhejiang province has established its own localised version of the National 1,000 Talents Plan. The **Zhejiang Provincial 1,000 Talents Plan** offers significant financial support to high-level overseas scientists and experts who decide to relocate to Zhejiang for conducting research in high-tech industries or in new fields at the frontiers of science, or to participate in the country's major scientific, engineering and innovative programmes, key laboratories, or in the financial and transportation sectors. Similarly to its national-level counterpart, the Zhejiang 1,000 Talents Plan is divided into different categories, one of which **exclusively targeting foreign experts**.

It is expected that the programme will end by 2020.

Eligibility requirements (foreign expert programme):

- Foreign nationals (including non-ethnic Chinese)
- Under 65 years' old
- Committed to be based in Zhejiang for at least 9 months per year for 3 consecutive years
- Full professorship or an equivalent title in a prestigious foreign university or research institute; or senior technology or management position in a renowned international enterprise or financial institution

Benefits:

The awardees will be conferred the title of 'Zhejiang Distinguished Expert', and will be mainly granted substantial benefits and financial assistance in terms of working and living conditions, priority when applying to national and local-level R&D programmes and megaprojects, etc.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis – usually in March – on the [official website of the programme](#).

The application and selection procedure is similar to that of the [national-level 1,000 Talents Plan](#). Applications must be submitted by the host recruiting institution, which should be an university or research structure (or enterprise) with independent legal personality in Zhejiang, and with good credit records in line with relevant local regulations.

A key prerequisite for each interested applicant is to first have an employment agreement with the Zhejiang-based host institution. In many cases, host institutions will publish ad hoc job ads on their official channels for professorship or research positions specifically assigned through the provincial 1,000 Talents Plan, with earlier internal deadlines. Additional requirements relating to specific research fields, topics and specialisations may also be requested by single host institutions.

Useful links:

[Zhejiang Provincial 1,000 Talents Plan website](#)

[Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese)

Hangzhou '115' Foreign Talent Recruitment Plan

The **Hangzhou '115' Foreign Talent Recruitment Plan** was established by the Hangzhou branch of the CCP, the Hangzhou Municipal Bureau of Human Resources and Social Security, and the Hangzhou Municipal Bureau of Finance, to encourage local research institutes and enterprises to recruit high-level foreign experts that can contribute to the development of key priority industries and sectors. Over the period 2016-2020, a total of **100** high-level experts will be recruited, implementing around **1,000** projects, and involving a total of around **50,000** experts from all over the globe ('115').

The programme will end in 2020, although it is expected that it will be renewed for the next five-year period.

Eligibility requirements:

The recruited expert should operate in one of the following key fields:

- Information technologies and smart applications
- Projects very relevant to China's national cross-border e-commerce pilot zones, or national innovation demonstration zones
- Advanced manufacturing, fashion and cultural industries, financial services, leisure, healthcare
- Agriculture and other traditional strong industries
- Education, sanitation and urban planning

The recruited expert should also meet the following conditions:

- Recruited as PI of a major engineering or technology project, or as a mid-level manager
- Committed to work in Hangzhou for more than 1 year, for at least 2 months per year, and with an annual salary of over 300,000 RMB
- Hold a post equivalent to associate professor in foreign universities or research institutes; or hold a mid-senior management position in foreign renowned enterprises or agencies; or possess indigenous IPR on key core technologies

Benefits:

The local administration will grant subsidies to the recruiting entities to cover the remuneration of the recruited expert (max 600,000 RMB):

- Annual salary 300,000 – 500,000 RMB: 40% of salary subsidised
- Annual salary 500,000 – 800,000 RMB: 50% of salary subsidised
- Annual salary > 800,000 RMB: 60% of salary subsidised

Other funding support of 100,000 to 300,000 RMB will be granted to the projects implemented by the recruited expert. Other forms of support such as entry-exit immigration, medical insurance, children schooling, will be offered.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis (usually in the last quarter) on the website of the [Hangzhou Municipal Bureau of Human Resources and Social Security](#). Applications, however, must be submitted by the recruiting entity (and not by the recruited expert).

Useful links:

[*Opinions for the Implementation of the Hangzhou '115' Foreign Talent Recruitment Plan \(2016-2020\)*](#)

Shenzhen Distinguished Talents – Subsidies for foreign academicians

The Shenzhen municipal administration also offers a series of **additional bonuses and rewards** to domestic, returnee or foreign high-level experts who have recently moved to Shenzhen. These also target members or fellows of national science or engineering academies in developed countries – including European countries.

Eligibility requirements:

- Nobel prize winners (physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, or economy)
- Winners of national S&T prizes
- Academicians from the Chinese Academy of Sciences or the Chinese Academy of Engineering
- Members or fellows of national science or engineering academies in developed countries (including: Germany, France, Italy, United Kingdom, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, and Spain).

Benefits:

- 1 million RMB work bonus
- 6 million RMB of subsidy, or a free 200 m² apartment for 10 years (which could eventually be assigned to the expert for free to at the completion of the 10th year, based on work performance and residency status obtained in Shenzhen)
- 5,000 – 20,000 RMB of subsidies for several activities such as: participation to national or international conferences (as speakers), publication of papers, etc.
- Schooling for children in Shenzhen schools

How to apply

Applications are submitted throughout the entire year by the talent's employer – which should be an entity based in Shenzhen.

Additional benefits:

Foreign experts who meet the above requirements (and are less than 60 years' old), can also apply to be recognised as Category A Overseas Senior Talent, which grants additional 3 million RMB, 10,000 RMB / month of housing subsidy, and entry-exit immigration support.

Useful links:

[Application guidelines](#) (in Chinese)

Shenzhen Overseas Senior Talents Programme – Peacock Teams

The **Shenzhen Overseas Senior Talents Programme (Peacock Teams programme)** supports high-level returnees and foreign expert teams to relocate to Shenzhen to conduct innovation or entrepreneurship activities in the city. It particularly prioritises projects in the following fields: internet, biology, new energy, new materials, ICT, energy saving and environment protection, oceans, aerospace and aviation, health, robotics, wearable devices, and intelligent equipment.

Eligibility requirements:

- The team should be composed of a team leader (max 60 years' old) and at least two core members (average team age of 55). The team members should have already been working together for at least 2 years, should have strong capacities for research and innovation, and should have realised important achievements with good prospects for commercialisation
- The team should be composed of overseas experts (including foreign experts, returnees, or Chinese nationals with extensive overseas study or work experience), or of high-level talents (Nobel prize laureates, academicians from China or development countries, awardees of the 1,000 Talents Plan or the Changjiang Scholar, etc.)
- Should have relocated to Shenzhen no more than 3 years before the application is submitted
- If selected, the team must commit to work in Shenzhen for at least 5 years, with at least half of the team core members and the leader working full-time (more than 9 months per year). Restructuring and adjustment of the team composition is not allowed if it involves the team leader, while that of core members must follow strict procedures.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis on the website of the [Shenzhen Municipal Science, Technology and Innovation Commission](#).

Applications, however, must be submitted by the recruiting entity (and not by the recruited expert) – which should be an entity with legal personality in Shenzhen municipality, or in the Shenzhen-Shanwei Special Cooperation Area.

Benefits:

10 to 100 million RMB of grants per team (the average award is 20 million RMB). It is understood that failed applications which nonetheless have strong potential can be offered up to 5 million RMB of grants. Additional funding support may be granted by relevant district-level authorities.

Useful links:

[Latest call for application in 2019](#) (in Chinese)

Anhui Foreign Expert Hundred Talents Plan

Similarly to other provincial-level administrations across China, the provincial administration in Anhui has established the **Anhui Foreign Expert Hundred Talents Plan** – a dedicated programme for the recruitment of senior foreign experts to work in local universities, research structures or enterprises, either on a full-term or short-term basis.

It is expected that the programme will end by 2020.

Eligibility requirements (foreign expert programme)

The foreign talent has an academic degree obtained in overseas renowned universities, and must possess one of the following conditions:

- Expert or scholar with a full professorship (or equivalent title) in overseas renowned universities or key research institutes, who shall commit to major local or national-level research projects after the recruitment
- Senior technology or management talent in a foreign renowned enterprise or financial institution, who shall occupy a senior manager position after the recruitment
- Possession (or mastering) of IPRs with international leading levels (or able to fill domestic blanks) and strong commercialisation prospects, and developed through indigenous innovation
- Member of a high-level overseas expert team (defined as teams responsible for implementing provincial- or national-level megaprojects in Anhui-based universities, research structures, key laboratories or state key laboratories)
- Other talents urgently needed for Anhui's local development

In addition, the following requirements must be met depending on working time after recruitment:

- **Long-term foreign experts:** non-ethnic Chinese, less than 65 years' old, who has signed a 3-year (at least) employment contract with the local recruiting entity, requiring field work in China for at least 15 months over the period.
- **Short-term foreign experts:** foreign national (not necessarily non-ethnic Chinese), less than 65 years' old, who has signed a 1-year (at least) employment contract with the local recruiting entity, requiring field work in China for at least 2 months per year.

Benefits:

The awardees will be mainly granted substantial benefits and financial assistance (generally 500,000 RMB) in terms of working and living conditions, priority when applying to national and local-level R&D programmes and megaprojects, etc.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis – usually in August/September.

The application and selection procedure is similar to that of the [national-level 1,000 Talents Plan](#). Applications must be submitted by the Anhui-based recruiting entity. A key prerequisite for each interested applicant, therefore, is to first have an employment agreement with the Anhui-based host institution. In many cases, host institutions will publish ad hoc job ads on their official channels for professorship or research positions specifically assigned through the Plan, with earlier internal deadlines. Additional requirements relating to specific research fields, topics and specialisations may also be requested by single host institutions.

Useful links:

[Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese)

Shaanxi Provincial Thousand Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)

The Shaanxi province's branch of the CPC and the provincial government have established a provincial-level version of the National 1,000 Talents Plan. The **Shaanxi Provincial 1,000 Talents Plan** offers significant financial support to high-level overseas scientists and experts who decide to relocate within Shaanxi province for conducting research in high-tech industries or in new fields at the frontiers of science, or to participate in the country's major scientific, engineering and innovative programmes, key laboratories, or in the financial and transportation sectors. Similarly to its national-level counterpart, the Shaanxi 1,000 Talents Plan is divided into different categories, one of which **exclusively targeting foreign experts**.

It is expected that the programme will end by 2020.

Eligibility requirements (foreign expert programme):

- Foreign nationals (including non-ethnic Chinese)
- Under 68 years' old
- Committed to remain in Shaanxi province for at least 3 years
- Full professorship or an equivalent title in a prestigious foreign university, research institute, medical institute; or senior technology or management position in a renowned international enterprise or financial institution
- Publication in the last 5 years of high-quality papers, and recognition of national/int'l awards
- Possess scientific results that have the potential of boosting the indigenous innovation and product/technology upgrading of enterprises

Benefits:

The awardees will be conferred the title of 'Shaanxi Distinguished Expert', and will be mainly granted substantial benefits and financial and administrative assistance in terms of working and living conditions, for instance: 1 million RMB as a reward; living allowance; 300,000 to 1,000,000 RMB of research grants; support with entry-exit immigration, schooling for children, visa for spouse, medical insurance, etc.; priority when applying to national and local-level R&D programmes and megaprojects, etc.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis – usually in two batches in the first and second half of the year – on websites of relevant Hunan-based universities and research institutes (see e.g. link below).

The application and selection procedure is similar to that of the [national-level 1,000 Talents Plan](#). Applications must be submitted by the host recruiting institution on behalf of the recruited talents. A prior employment agreement between the talent and the host recruiting institution is required. Interested candidates will need to contact the potential recruiting institution within the deadline.

Useful links:

[Latest call for application in 2018](#) (second batch, in Chinese), published on the website of the Shaanxi University of Technology

Shandong 'Double Hundred' Foreign Expert Plan

The Shandong provincial government and provincial party branch have launched a specific plan to recruit **high-level foreign (non-ethnic Chinese) talents and teams**, particularly those involved in original innovation research with good prospects of achieving technology breakthroughs and commercialisation. The 'double hundred' plan supports (i) individual talent projects; and (ii) team projects.

Eligibility requirements:

Individual talent projects are divided into long-term (committed to work in Shandong for 3 consecutive years, for at least 6 months annually) and short-term (for at least 2 months annually). Applicants should be non-ethnic Chinese foreign citizens, less than 65 years' old, with Ph.D. degree obtained abroad, and at least one of the following conditions:

- Associate professor (or above) in foreign renowned universities or research structures; awardee of major international prizes, with leading capacities and levels in the corresponding field
- Mid/senior manager in foreign renowned enterprises or financial institutions, possessing major scientific results (or invention patents, IPR) which can boost local indigenous innovation, product and technology upgrading and breakthroughs
- Other high-level talents with key records and/or capacities in technology breakthrough and product development, particularly in emerging and strategic industries

Applicants for team projects should be team composed of 3-5 people, complimentary with each other, committed to work in Shandong for at least 3 consecutive years for at least 6 months annually (3 for the team leader, and 3 for team members). The requirements are the same as those for individual talents (with the exception that Master's degree – rather than Ph.D. – will be sufficient for non-core team members).

Benefits:

Recruited individual talents will receive up to 1.4 million RMB of subsidies, while teams will receive up to 4 million RMB. These specifically cover:

- Living allowance (up to 500,000 RMB for individuals, 1 million RMB for teams)
- Integrated salary, up to 60% of the remuneration already granted to the expert by his/her recruiting entity (up to 300,000 RMB per year for individuals, 800,000 RMB per year for teams)
- Scientific research grants, up to 1.2 million RMB, especially for teams involved in basic research
- Other needs

Recruited 'double hundred' foreign experts will be particularly endorsed and supported by the provincial administration to apply to the national 1,000 talents plan or government-sponsored friendship awards. In addition, they will be granted all kinds of administrative support, including a green card.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis – usually in the first half – on website of the human resources bureau of the Shandong province, as well as on websites of relevant Shandong-based universities and research institutes.

The application and selection procedure is similar to that of the [national-level 1,000 Talents Plan](#). Applications must be submitted by the host recruiting institution on behalf of the recruited talents. A prior employment agreement between the talent and the host recruiting institution is required. Interested candidates will need to contact the potential recruiting institution within the deadline.

Useful links:

[Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese)

Hubei Provincial Hundred Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)

Similarly to other provincial-level administrations across China, the CPC branch of Hubei province has established its own localised overseas talent recruitment programme. The **Hubei Provincial Hundred Talents Plan** aims to recruit from abroad different categories of high-level experts to work in local universities, research structures or enterprises, including young talents, entrepreneurs and financial experts. One of these categories is **exclusively directed to (non-ethnic Chinese) foreign experts**.

It is expected that the programme will end by 2020.

Eligibility requirements (foreign expert programme)

- Foreign nationals (non-ethnic Chinese)
- Under 65 years' old
- 10+ years of full-time work experience in overseas renowned universities, research structures or (Fortune 500) enterprises, with full professorship (or equivalent title) or senior technology position (could be relaxed in case the candidate possesses IPR in sectors which are extremely needed for local development)
- Ph.D. degree obtained in overseas leading universities
- Possession of one of the following conditions:
 - Publication in the last 5 years on a major international journal
 - Beneficiary of an important national or international S&T award or prize
 - Experience in implementing major scientific research projects abroad

Benefits:

The awardees will be mainly granted substantial benefits and financial assistance (generally 500,000 RMB) in terms of working and living conditions, priority when applying to national and local-level R&D programmes and megaprojects, etc.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis – usually in July.

The application and selection procedure is similar to that of the [national-level 1,000 Talents Plan](#). Applications must be submitted by the host recruiting institution, which should be an university, research structure, or enterprise with independent legal personality in Hubei, and with good credit records in line with relevant local regulations.

A key prerequisite for each interested applicant is to first have an employment agreement with the Hubei-based host institution. In many cases, host institutions will publish ad hoc job ads on their official channels for professorship or research positions specifically assigned through the provincial 100 Talents Plan, with earlier internal deadlines. Additional requirements relating to specific research fields, topics and specialisations may also be requested by single host institutions.

Useful links:

[A guide for the programme published by the Hubei government](#) (in English, although slightly outdated)

[Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese)

Hunan Provincial Hundred Talents Plan (Foreign Experts programme)

The **Hunan Provincial Hundred Talents Plan** was launched nearly a decade ago by the Organisational Department of the Hunan's CPC branch. It aims to recruit from abroad different categories of experts (including young experts and teams) who operate especially in the area of advanced manufacturing and machinery, new materials, energy-saving and environmental technologies, new energy, ICT and Internet+, biopharmaceuticals, and cultural and creative industries. One category under the plan is **exclusively directed to (non-ethnic Chinese) foreign experts**.

It is expected that the programme will end by 2020.

Eligibility requirements (foreign expert programme)

- Foreign nationals (non-ethnic Chinese)
- Under 65 years' old
- Ph.D. degree obtained in overseas leading universities, currently associate professor or equivalent
- Recruited not more than 5 years ago, or in the process of being recruited, by a Hunan-based entity (university, lab, enterprise) for the implementation of provincial- or national-level major and key projects, such as [National Key R&D Programmes](#) or the [Technology Innovation Guiding Fund](#), or for the running of provincial- or national-level research facilities/laboratories

Benefits:

The awardees will be mainly granted substantial benefits and financial assistance in terms of working and living conditions, priority when applying to national and local-level R&D programmes and megaprojects, etc., although detailed amounts are not specified and generally vary from institution to institution (e.g. Xiangtan University offers a 300,000 RMB relocation allowance, a 500,000 – 1,000,000 RMB research grant, plus annual salary and project allowance.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis, usually in the third quarter, on websites of relevant Hunan-based universities and research institutes (see e.g. link below).

Applications must be submitted by the host recruiting institution on behalf of the recruited talents. A prior employment agreement between the talent and the host recruiting institution is required. Interested candidates will need to contact the potential recruiting institution within the deadline.

Useful links:

[Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese), published on the website of the Hunan University of Science and Technology

Fujian Provincial Foreign Expert Hundred Talents Plan

The **Fujian Provincial Foreign Expert Hundred Talents Plan** is a dedicated programme launched by the Fujian provincial government to recruit three categories of foreign experts (including both non-ethnic Chinese and returnees): foreign experts; foreign expert teams; and foreign young experts.

Eligibility requirements:

Candidates for the 'Foreign experts' category must commit to work in the Fujian-based recruiting entity for at least two months, and possess one of the following conditions

- Associate professor or associate research in a foreign renowned university or research institute
- Mid-senior technology position in foreign renowned corporations or financial institutions
- Mid-senior manager in an international organisation, foreign government, or renowned NGO
- Rich experience in implementing large international research projects
- Possess core technologies or IPR in key technologies, products and industries
- Other urgently-needed talents

Foreign expert teams:

- The team leader should be an awardee of one of the following schemes: national 1,000 talent plan, national high-end foreign expert recruitment plan, foreign academicians, other similar national or provincial-level schemes
- The team should be composed of 3 to 5 foreign researchers relocating to Fujian for at least two months, and meeting the requirements of the 'foreign expert' category above

Foreign young experts:

- Less than 40 years' old
- Strong growth and leadership potential
- Master's degree or above, with at least 3 years of overseas work experience in renowned universities, research structures or corporations, in the field of natural sciences, engineering, finance, or economic management (requirements might be relaxed for graduate students who have generated outstanding results during their studies)
- Has already reached an employment agreement with a Fujian-based recruiting entity, and is committed to work in Fujian for at least 6 months every year

Benefits:

The awardees will be mainly granted financial assistance in terms of working and living conditions (100,000 to 200,000 RMB), priority when applying to local-level R&D programmes, and to government-sponsored friendship prizes. Other benefits may be granted by individual recruiting entities.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis, usually in March-April, on websites of relevant Fujian-based universities and research institutes (see e.g. link below).

Applications must be submitted by the host recruiting institution on behalf of the recruited talents. A prior employment agreement between the talent and the host recruiting institution is required. Interested candidates will need to contact the potential recruiting institution within the deadline.

Useful links:

[Latest call for application in 2018](#) (in Chinese), published on the website of the Xiamen University

Yunnan Provincial Foreign Expert Introduction Programme

The **Yunnan Provincial Foreign Expert Introduction Programme** was launched in 2016 by the Yunnan Provincial Department of Science and Technology to introduce high-level foreign experts to contribute to the development of the province's key priority industries: biopharmaceuticals and healthcare; tourism and cultural industries; information industries; logistics; modern agriculture; new materials; advanced manufacturing; food and consumer products. The foreign experts might be recruited for three different categories of projects:

- 'Key foreign experts' (or teams), focusing on world-leading exploratory and original research;
- 'Conventional foreign experts', dedicated to realising technology breakthroughs;
- 'Training foreign experts', coming to Yunnan to conduct short-term trainings/exchanges in key fields;
- 'Technology transfer foreign experts' (or teams), focusing on transferring key technology results within Yunnan province.

Eligibility requirements:

The recruiting entity should be a university, research institute or enterprise officially based and registered in Yunnan. The experts recruited should meet one of the following requirements:

- Associate professor (or above) in a foreign renowned university or research structures
- Senior technology or management position in an international renowned enterprise or agency
- Entrepreneur with indigenous IPR on core technologies
- Other senior talents or young talents urgently-needed by the country and/or Yunnan province.

Long-term cooperation of the recruited foreign expert with the Yunnan-based recruiter is encouraged.

Benefits:

The awardees will be mainly granted financial assistance in terms of working and living conditions (100,000 to 200,000 RMB), priority when applying to local-level R&D programmes, and to government-sponsored friendship prizes. Other benefits may be granted by individual recruiting entities.

How to apply

New calls for application are published on an annual basis, usually in February, on websites of the Yunnan Provincial Department of Science and Technology.

Applications must be submitted by the Yunnan-based recruiting institution on behalf of the recruited talents. A prior employment agreement between the talent and the recruiter is required. Interested candidates will need to contact the potential recruiting institution within the deadline.

Useful links:

[Latest call for application in 2019](#) (in Chinese)

Hong Kong Ph.D. Fellowship Scheme (HKPFS)

The **Hong Kong Ph.D. Fellowship Scheme** (HKPFS) was established in 2009 by the Research Grants Council – an advisory body on research issues under the Hong Kong University Grants Committee – with the aim of attracting the most talented postgraduate students from all over the world to pursue their Ph.D. programmes in one of Hong Kong's eight leading universities (City University of Hong Kong; Chinese University of Hong Kong; Hong Kong Polytechnic University; Hong Kong University of Science and Technology; University of Hong Kong; Education University of Hong Kong; Hong Kong Baptist University; Lingnan University). It is a very prestigious programme that offers generous stipends and excellent support for conducting research in Hong Kong. Around 250 fellowships are assigned every year.

Eligibility requirements:

All candidates seeking admission as new full-time Ph.D. students in the eight Hong Kong universities listed above, irrespective of their country of origin, prior work experience, and ethnicity, are welcomed to apply. The main evaluation criterion is the candidate's academic excellence, although other factors such as research ability and potential, communication, interpersonal and leadership skills, are also considered.

Benefits:

The Fellowship provides several **benefits**:

- Annual stipend of 301,200 HKD (around 33,700 EUR) for up to three years (extendable in limited cases)
- Conference and research-related travel allowance of 12,600 HKD (around 1,400 EUR) per year
- Additional support in applying to research grants and funding opportunities in Hong Kong, such as those under the Research Grants Council (i.e. Theme-based Research Scheme; Areas of Excellence Scheme; General Research Fund; Early Career Scheme; etc.).

How to apply

New HKPFS positions are **open for every academic year** (starting in September).

Candidates are first required to make an online application through the [HKPFS electronic system](#) to obtain a reference number. Up to two programmes can be chosen in one or two universities for Ph.D. studies. Applications are then submitted directly to the selected universities (contact details for each university are included in the HKPFS official website, see link below). **Specific universities may have different application deadlines** (usually in early December every year), plus eventually additional eligibility requirements.

Shortlisted applicants, subject to their proposed areas of studies, will be admitted to final review from one of two selection panels (Sciences, Medicine, Engineering and Technology; and Humanities, Social Sciences and Business Studies). Final results are generally notified before the summer every year.

Useful links:

[Official website of the Research Grants Council](#) (in English), containing very detailed information on the latest round of calls for the year 2019/2020. [Another useful website.](#)

Note: international co-funding mechanisms are also available in Hong Kong, such as: (i) NSFC-RGC joint research scheme with mainland China; (ii) ANR (French National Research Agency) -RGC joint research scheme; (iii) EU-HK Research and Innovation Cooperation Co-funding Mechanism; (iv) travel/conference grants with Germany and France.

Note 2: following the publication of the [Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area](#) in February 2018, Hong Kong-based researchers are expected to play a much more central role in mainland China funding programmes as well, such as the National Natural Science Fund, and National Key R&D Programmes.