

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Generation UK scholars and interns welcomed to China

The second cohort of UK scholars and interns arriving in China on the British Council's Generation UK programme was welcomed at special receptions held in the British Centre in Shanghai and the British Ambassador's Residence in Beijing before the Chinese National Day holiday. The events brought together UK alumni and local business professionals to celebrate the growing number of young people from the UK engaging with China through academic study and internships.

Generation UK was launched in 2013 to encourage and support student mobility to China. It aims to see at least 80,000 UK students participate in academic study or internships in China by 2020, shaping a new generation of more globally, culturally and business aware young people.

Speaking at the Beijing reception, Her Majesty's Ambassador to China Sir Sebastian Wood congratulated the students on making a strategic decision. "By choosing to study Chinese, which is emerging as a central language in the global economy, you are acquiring a skill that could shape your entire life."

"I'm really proud that the number of British students in China is growing so fast. The British Council has made a great effort and there has been generous support, not only from the UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, the Department for Employment and Learning of Northern Ireland, and the Welsh Government, but also from the Chinese government and provincial departments of education."

Underlining the British Council's ongoing commitment to promoting international opportunities to students across the UK, the goal of Generation UK is to support the ambition, academic achievement and international business skills of UK students by offering more opportunities to engage with China through academic study and internships. By facilitating such experiences, which help participants gain global perspectives and an international skills advantage, Generation UK is increasing the employability of young people from the UK, thereby contributing to the UK's competitive standing in the global economy.

Talking of his experience of studying in China, Ben Miller, this year's Generation UK Student Representative who is currently studying on an intensive Chinese language programme at Peking University, said: "China's diversity and the contrasts it has as such a huge country have really captured my imagination. It's an extremely interesting and exciting place to be."

"Young people now, students especially, need to be thinking in terms of when and how, rather than whether, they might work in other countries or with people of other nationalities. The international experience the Generation UK programme encourages is really key in equipping us young people for our careers and gives British students a head start in international education."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About Generation UK

Generation UK was launched by the British Council in June 2013 to encourage more students in the UK to undertake study and/or internship placements in China. Scholarships for up to a year in a Chinese higher education institution are available, or funded internships for up to two months with Chinese companies. All UK students aged 18 and over either studying at a UK institution or having graduated within a year are eligible to apply to Generation UK.

5,400 UK students studied in China in 2013, an increase of 27 per cent year on year. There is already an upward trend of UK students coming to China. This year, we've also seen a 50 per cent increase in Generation UK applications year on year. Working with partners in the UK and in China, the Generation UK campaign will boost the rapidly increasing numbers even further, encouraging UK students to come to China and creating even more opportunities for them to do so.

Generation UK video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e2MTSHnctW0>

Generation UK website: <http://www.britishcouncil.org.cn/genuk>

About the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 7,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

We are a UK charity governed by Royal Charter. A core publically-funded grant provides less than 25 per cent of our turnover which last year was £781 million. The rest of our revenues are earned from services which customers around the world pay for, through education and development contracts and from partnerships with public and private organisations. All our work is in pursuit of our charitable purpose and supports prosperity and security for the UK and globally.

For more information, please visit: www.britishcouncil.org. You can also keep in touch with the British Council through twitter.com/britishcouncil and blog.britishcouncil.org/.

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