

Summary of TNE workshop with the Chinese Ministry of Education

The British Council China held a TNE workshop with experts from China's Ministry of Education (MoE) in London on 3 June, with over 180 representatives from UK education institutions participating.

During the workshop, MoE representatives and TNE experts talked about the common issues faced by institutions when applying to set up joint programmes and institutes in China, and shed light on the type of partnerships that are most welcomed by Chinese institutions and authorities. Case studies were also presented to share best-practice.

Internationalisation of the education sector is a key component of China's national plan for development and a large number of Sino-foreign education partnerships have been established in recent years, both in China and overseas. The UK holds the top position in China's TNE market with more than 250 partnerships at degree level and above, but approval of new partnerships is becoming stricter. The MoE is emphasising partnerships in strategic subject areas and paying more attention to the quality delivery of foreign partner institutions. There has also been a shift towards promoting partnerships with institutions based in China's central and western regions.

Key points raised in the workshop include:

- The MoE discourages “chain store” approaches to TNE partnerships, through which similar or different programmes are set up with multiple Chinese institutions¹. This means that it is increasingly important for new market entrants find good matches from the start.
- Joint programmes focused on science, engineering, agriculture and medicine are viewed more favourably than programmes in saturated subject areas such as business and economics.
- TNE programmes should be primarily focused on delivery in China, not on foreign study.

¹ At present there are no firm guidelines in this area, but the MoE preference is a maximum of six joint programmes or three partner institutions.

- 
- China's tax authorities are paying greater scrutiny towards visiting professors, which means that foreign universities should ensure that their visiting staff are in compliance with all relevant visa and tax regulations. Statements by partner institutions to the contrary should not be regarded as insurance against legal consequences in the future.

The workshop was followed by a Q&A session, which covered China's priorities for international education partnerships, the obligations of foreign partners, and how the MoE assesses applications.

The International Unit also wrote a [blog](#) post about the event.

Please contact Cathy He (cathy.he@britishcouncil.org.cn) for further queries.