

UK-China Skills Partnership Fund China Mission 2016

The British Council is inviting UK institutions and organisations involved in skills and technical vocational education and training (TVET) development in the UK to join a mission to China from 7-18 March 2016.

This opportunity is funded and supported by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills under the UK-China Partners in Education (UKCPIE) initiative.

Context and Strategic Objectives

The UK-China Skills Partnership Fund aims to deepen UK-China skills partnerships and deliver three main strategic objectives:

1. Link research, policy and practice to achieve greater impact
2. Deepen and enable sector-based collaboration to support priority industries
3. Support the professional development of key individuals

The Chinese Ministry of Education recently published an Action Plan for Tertiary Vocational Education (2015-2018). The country now encourages Chinese universities to become university of applied technology in order to strengthen vocational based tertiary education and training for students. It also calls for more international collaboration to support China in reforming its vast vocational system and develop a world-class work force, including setting up joint programmes in priority industries and subjects.

These developments provide the UK with an unprecedented opportunity to deepen engagement with China on skills development for the benefit of young people in both countries.

The British Council is organising this mission to bring a group of UK institutes and organisations to China. The core aims are to:

- Help the UK TVET sector to develop a deeper understanding of China's skills system and its development priorities
- Enable key UK players to meet and develop relationships with their Chinese counterparts
- Identify strategic areas that have the greatest potential for the UK and China to work together in supporting economic development and youth employability
- Collectively develop an action plan for the development of long-term UK-China TVET collaborations with growth potential

Programme, Contents and Requirements

The mission is planned from 7-18 March 2016 and will include (TBC):

- A policy briefing from the Chinese Ministry of Education and related think tanks
- Visits to China's provinces to develop an in-depth understanding of regional priorities and markets (delegates will be divided into groups, each group will visit one province)
- Visits to local vocational schools, colleges and universities to gain a first-hand understanding of China's TVET system and current priorities

- Participation in and contribution to the ‘2016 UK-China Policy Dialogue: Developing an International Strategy for TVET Excellence’ in Beijing on 17 March 2016, which will be taking place as part of the UK-China Education Policy Week (click for more details about related events and opportunities:
<https://siem.britishcouncil.org/event/2016-uk-china-education-policy-week>).

Participants will be expected to:

- understand the strategic objectives of the UK-China Skills Partnership Fund and be committed to achieving the specific purposes of the visit
- proactively share their knowledge and experience with the Chinese host organisations
- contribute to policy dialogue, including opportunities for formal presentations at the 2016 UK-China Policy Dialogue on 17 March
- submit individual and/or group reports on identified opportunities and priorities for the UK skills sector in China and proposals on how to achieve them

Assessment

The British Council will work with its Chinese partner organisations to confirm the final list of participants. Considerations will include:

- Roles and responsibilities of the UK institutes and organisations
- Alignment with China’s priorities
- Capacity, experience and track record of the participants in meeting the strategic objectives

Who can apply?

This opportunity is open to all UK institutes and organisations in the UK, including:

- Leading bodies with national and regional roles in TVET and skills development
- Sector skills councils, industrial associations and awarding bodies
- Consortium, universities and vocational colleges that have a strong TVET offer and are experienced in working internationally

Please note, participants from England will be fully funded by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Participants from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland can register as self-funded participants.

UK institutes and organisations already in receipt of funding through the UKCPIE but who have yet to complete their funding activities by the end of December 2015 are not eligible to apply for this opportunity.

How to apply?

To apply, please complete the attached registration form and return it to partnershipfund@britishcouncil.org.cn by 23:59 pm GMT on **31 January 2016**, writing ‘UK-China Skills Partnership China Mission’ as the subject line.

Please note, there is a word limit to the application form. Any words exceeding the word limit will NOT be considered.

Successful applicants will be notified by 16 February 2016

For any enquiries, please contact:

Dewi Knight
Senior Education Adviser China
British Council UK
dewi.knight@britishcouncil.org

Liu Qin
Head of Policy and Skills
British Council China
liu.qin@britishcouncil.org.cn

Annex: Background to UK-China TVET Collaboration

The development of skills and employability, particularly of younger generations, is crucial to a nation's sustainable development, global competitiveness, and long-term prosperity. A skilled workforce not only contributes to economic growth but also promotes social mobility. Both the UK and Chinese governments are committed to increasing youth employment, with skills and TVET development a key component of their national strategies.

In China, the government is addressing its skills gaps structurally with three main lines of reform:

- improving education provision through progression pathways and encouraging universities to become universities of applied technology
- strengthening university-industry links through modern apprenticeships
- aligning related reforms with national economic strategies and focusing on developing high-level skills (for example, skills in green technology and, more recently, innovation and entrepreneurship)

Since 2012, the UK and China have worked closely together in skills development and so far:

- 65 pairs of UK and Chinese vocational colleges have been linked, of which 17 have developed long-term partnerships directly benefiting more than 50,000 students
- more than 300 UK and Chinese vocational college principals have been involved in the British Council's Principal Shadowing programme, visiting China for professional development
- more than 1,000 vocational teachers and practitioners have been trained, including leadership training for 200 college leaders and policy makers
- more than 300,000 college students have gained international exposure through skills roadshows, hugely boosting and raising the profile of vocational education in both countries.
- collaboration in quality assurance and on progression pathways has had a substantial impact on China's policy thinking and TVET reform