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## British Council celebrates UK alumni in China

**(Beijing 9 December 2019)** The British Council announced the recipients of the Study UK Alumni Awards 2019-20 in China at an awards ceremony in Beijing. In total, nine UK alumni in China were recognised for their outstanding achievements as business professionals, entrepreneurs and community leaders, and for their important contribution to strengthening collaborative ties between the UK and China.



Finalists of the Study UK Alumni Awards 2019-20 in China with Matt Burney, Director China and judges  
Photo by Tao Xing

The prestigious international award celebrates UK higher education and the achievements of UK alumni all over the world. Now in its sixth year, the award received more than 1,200 applications from international UK alumni from over 100 countries, representing over 120 higher education institutions across the UK. Following in-depth interviews with a judging panel, recipients were selected for the three award categories: Professional Achievement, Entrepreneurial, and Social Impact.

Matt Burney, Country Director at the British Council in China, said: “The Alumni Awards allow us to come together to celebrate the role international students play in making the UK one of the most diverse, dynamic and rewarding higher education destinations for international study. It also allows us to recognise the achievements and contributions that alumni from China and around the world have made to their communities. At the British Council, it is our role to connect young people from the UK, China and around the world, to such opportunities. Helping them learn English, access internationally recognised qualifications, experience the UK’s culture and study internationally.”

### Professional Achievement Award



Dr Feng Gao, winner of the Professional Achievement Award in China  
Photo credit: Dr Feng Gao

The Professional Achievement Award, which recognises alumni who have distinguished themselves through exemplary leadership in their professional field, was presented to Dr Feng Gao. Dr Feng Gao is the co-founder and Managing Director of Open Data China, the first civic group and social enterprise in China to address the issue of transparent and open data flows. Dr Feng's publications and talks on open data are featured worldwide by media and at conferences.



Finalists of the Professional Achievement Award with Joshua Law, Vice President for North Asia,  
Qatar Airways  
Photo by Tao Xing

### Social Impact Award

The Social Impact Award, which acknowledges alumni who have made an exceptional contribution to creating positive social change, was presented to Qing Gu, a graduate of the University of Oxford. Qing Gu is the Programme Officer at Ford Foundation, developing programmes in the fields of philanthropy and impact investment. She builds relationships with Chinese foundations and philanthropy thought leaders. Before joining the Ford Foundation in 2018, Qing worked at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in China for nine years. Before that, she supervised international judicial cooperation in the Chinese government.

Upon receiving the award, Gu said: "I think this honour not only belongs to myself, but also to all the students who have this wonderful experience in the UK. My UK experience planted a seed in my heart. I think this was also the start of both of my life and work commitments. By applying for the Alumni Awards, I want to share my career experience with the younger generation who want to study in the UK."



Qing Gu, winner of the Social Impact Award  
Photo by Tao Xing



Finalists of the Social Impact Award with Ms Bei Guo, Vice President of EIC Education  
Photo by Tao Xing

### Entrepreneurial Award

The Entrepreneurial Award, which highlights alumni who have played a leading role in innovation or creative solutions, was presented to Yiping Xia, a graduate of the University of Essex. Yiping Xia is the co-founder and former CTO of Mobike, the bike-sharing platform which now has more than 200 million users worldwide. In April 2018, Meituan acquired Mobike for 2.7 billion USD. Yiping received an honorary doctoral degree from the University of Essex in 2019.

“This award acknowledges my previous study experience in the UK, as well as my achievement with Mobike. This is not an end for me, I think this is a new start.” Xia said upon receiving the award.



Yiping Xia, winner of the Entrepreneurial Award with Matt Burney

Photo by Tao Xing



Finalists of the Entrepreneurial Award with Matt Burney  
Photo by Tao Xing



Matt Burney, Director China, British Council

Photo by Tao Xing

China is the first country to host the awards this year and will be followed by award ceremonies in a further twelve countries, including Pakistan and Turkey.