

FUNDING IN THE UK FOR HIGHER LEVEL NON-SCIENTIFIC CHINA RELATED STUDIES

The British Association for Chinese Studies



August 2021

The original November 2013 version of this report was commissioned by the Universities' China Committee in London (UCCL). The report is owned and updated by the British Association for Chinese Studies (BACS) with financial support from UCCL. The original report was compiled with the assistance of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Kingdom.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Aims:** This survey aims to give a broad overview of funding available to students and researchers of China related subjects. It also provides information on funding available to Chinese students and researchers coming to the UK.
- **Method:** An internet search of leading funding bodies, charities and databases was conducted in mid 2020 and checked in August 2021. The results were used to confirm and update the spreadsheet format that was introduced in 2019 to make searching for relevant funding opportunities easier.
- **Chinese studies funding:** The survey shows that the funding available to students and researchers specifically for Chinese studies covers a range of activities, but the number of opportunities is limited compared to the demand. The funding comes from government organisations, research bodies, charitable organisations, corporations and, occasionally, universities.
- **Generic funding:** Also listed are funding opportunities that are not specific to China focussed research, for which the competition will be greater. There are also sources of funding which have highly specific eligibility criteria, but for which some researchers within the broad spectrum of 'Chinese studies' might plausibly apply. Relevant prizes and awards are included for different career stages.
- **Bexit:** With Brexit now a reality we have some answers to how research funding will be affected in the long term; for instance, it was eventually confirmed that UK researchers would remain eligible for major EU research funding. However, EU students are now counted as 'international', and will have to pay much higher course fees as a consequence. It remains to be seen what effects this will have on enrolments generally, and specifically for Chinese studies.
- **Covid:** The Covid pandemic was already a factor in last year's funding update, and has now generated new issues for universities and for Chinese studies. For instance, the Newton Fund, of which China was a target country, has not been renewed due to a Covid-induced cut to the UK aid budget that has halved UK research council funding. Some other funding programmes have been suspended at least temporarily, or have been restructured or re-targetted. It is too early to say how many of those suspended will return to their previous operation.
- **Government funding:** Chinese government funding outweighs that of the UK, both in bringing students from China to study in the UK, and in sending students and researchers to China, through the China Scholarship Council and Hanban. The British Council's Generation UK programme has demonstrated massive growth since the previous edition of this report in 2016. It is currently suspended because of Covid, but it is expected to resume once travel becomes practical again.
- **Taiwan:** Taiwan continues to provide some reliable, though far smaller, programmes for Chinese studies through the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation.
- **Charitable funding:** Charitable trusts in the UK have demonstrated year on year growth since this report was first commissioned in 2013 (both in assets and grants given). Signs of this growth are not visible in Chinese studies funding, with both the UCCL and SBFT spending less in the most recent year for which we have data, though the projected growth in Wellcome Trust awards may benefit some Chinese Studies projects or scholars.
- **Corporate funders:** Companies also provide scholarship funding, limited to specific universities and courses.

AIMS

This survey aims to provide a broad overview of funding available to students and researchers of China focused studies in the UK. It also aims to provide an overview of funding available to students from the PRC, Hong Kong, and Taiwan to come as students or researchers to the UK. The report was originally commissioned by The Universities' China Committee in London (UCCL), and is updated and owned by the British Association for Chinese Studies (BACS).

SOURCES

An internet survey of funding for China related research took place between June and August 2020. The information was checked and updated in August 2021. The 2020 search included multiple funding bodies, charities and databases. Relevant funding sources were then compiled into a spreadsheet that would allow anyone in the field to find funding relevant to their career stage and research requirements. The list provided in the funding table cannot be considered definitive but hopes to provide a broad range of available funding options. For the purposes of this survey 'Chinese studies' includes studies related to mainland China and the SARs of Hong Kong and Macau, and Taiwan. Funding specifically for scientific or medical research has not been included.

The original survey in 2013 began with well known supporters of Chinese studies, such as the BACS website, the Great Britain-China Centre, The British Council, China Scholarship Council, and a search through the BACS mailing list archive. The search then fanned out to examine funding options with major research councils and associations, and following up links. A large proportion of the work for this survey went into examining educational trusts to see if their coverage included Chinese studies research or funding for students from China. Potential funders were identified, their annual reports reviewed, and if the scope was not clear they were approached by email or letter. The Scottish equivalent, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, was also searched. In subsequent years, the report has been updated to remove any funding that is no longer available and to add new arrivals on the funding landscape (as well as to ensure that all of the web links remain active).

For postgraduate funding, in previous years scholarship databases including Postgraduate Studentships (<https://www.postgraduatestudentships.co.uk/>), The Scholarship Hub (www.thescholarship.org.uk), Scholarship Search (<http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk/>) and Scholarships4Development (<http://www.scholars4dev.com/>) were searched for the terms 'China' and 'Chinese'. Most of these sites can now only be searched by broad generic categories such as 'Arts and Humanities' or 'Eastern, Asiatic, African, American & Australasian Languages, Literature & related subjects'. Scholarship Search can still be searched by 'China' but not 'Chinese', and after the first screen of results for 'China' the page returns a much larger number of results according to unspecified criteria. Scholarships4Development is the only one of these sites that allows user defined keyword searches, to produce usefully circumscribed lists, and only these results have been followed up this year. The other three sites are still listed in the funding table so that users have the links to hand should they wish to pursue potential further funding through these routes.

Since the situation is currently even more fluid because of Brexit and the Covid pandemic, this update has included in the table all identified opportunities that appear to have been available at any point in the academic year 2020-21. Some opportunities are included where the deadline for the current year has passed and it may be unclear whether there will be further rounds in future. In the current circumstances it seemed unwise to try to predict whether an opportunity will exist or not in the next twelve months that this update will be in use. Longstanding opportunities that are currently suspended due to Covid have also been included in the table, marked out in red, in the hope that they will be reinstated in some

form during the life of this update. Accordingly, users of the table will need to confirm the existence of opportunities of interest, and their deadlines, before making an application.

In addition to the above, university funding was also examined but with some limitations. University funding in this survey is only included when it is specific either to Chinese or Taiwanese students or to China studies. Scholarships from the China Scholarship Council for students from China are not included unless it is stated that it is a partnership with the hosting university. Within these parameters, individual university websites were checked in previous years and all relevant links were followed up. These have been checked and updated in 2021, but it is important to note that funding from specific universities, especially for taught postgraduate (PGT) programmes, is highly fluid, and users are urged to check the funding pages for universities to which they are considering making an application.

A further limitation of the survey regards internal funding. Researchers may have internal funding options from their university that will vary in amount and availability. This survey cannot hope to show all of the funding that is specific to individual institutions or departments. Therefore, funding opportunities for existing students and staff at an institution have been limited to just those that have a specific China focus. The survey also does not include awards that are dependent on a student or researcher accepting a long term position outside the UK, for example, as a tenure track scholar in the United States.

A final exclusion from the results is short term funding, such as funds related to a one-off call for research proposals. Such opportunities may be found on the websites of the major funders such as the Arts and Humanities Research Council. This kind of call for applications increasingly appears with short deadlines, and the best advice for those positioned to consider an application is to join the funders' mailing lists and to be in ongoing contact with their own institution's research support staff.

To compile the table, when appropriate funding was discovered, the details of the award such as level, activity, contact and website, were noted. In previous years, the findings of this survey were divided into five categories. 1) Funding for research and study activities with a China specific focus for UK based students, researchers and institutions; 2) Non China specific funding but for which UK based Chinese studies students, researchers and institutions could apply; 3) Non China specific funding with a narrow scope for which UK based Chinese studies researchers and students could apply; 4) Prizes and Awards; 5) Funding for Chinese students and scholars for study and research in the UK.

Since 2020 the approach to the presentation of the data has been changed with the objective of making it easier to find funding that is relevant to a user's specific needs. The results have therefore been compiled into a single spreadsheet that is available as a separate file.

THE 2020/21 FUNDING TABLE

Like last year, the spreadsheet table for this year's survey has been included as a separate, searchable document to make it easier to find funding opportunities relevant to the specific requirements of individual students, academics or institutions. The table is divided into nine columns. Each column has a filter at the top to help narrow down the selection for the user:

1. FUNDING TITLE

The name of the specific funding.

2. FUNDER/ADMINISTRATOR

The name of the funder or administrator of the fund in question.

3. FUNDING TYPE

The available funding is divided into eleven different funding types: Scholarship (any funding for students to help complete their studies), Language Training (funding specifically for language study), Competition/Prize (any competitions, awards and prizes with some form of financial reward), Research Expenses (small grants covering research costs for individual research, at various levels), Project (funding for a specific individual or group research project), Fellowship (postdoctoral or more senior fellowships involving time away from a scholar's 'home base' for individual research), Fieldwork (funding to attend a fieldwork project – funding to start your own fieldwork project would be listed under 'Project'), Conference/Travel (funds to cover travel costs or attend conferences, usually abroad), Publication (financial support for the completion of a monograph or article intended for publication), Outreach (funding specifically targeted at public facing projects), Internship (paid or unpaid internship opportunities), and Institutional Funding (funding for universities to assist in developing a department or hiring new staff). While there may be some crossover between these categories, the table uses 'Various' for funding schemes that meet the requirements of several different funding types.

4. CHINA/ASIAN STUDIES SPECIFIC

Whether the funding is specific to the field of Chinese or Asian studies. This is likely to affect the level of competition for any given funding.

5. ACADEMIC LEVEL

The academic level at which the funding is aimed. This has been divided into seven different categories: UG (for individuals applying for or currently enrolled on an undergraduate degree course), Graduate (for individuals who have completed a first degree but are not imminently continuing to further study), PGT (for individuals applying for or enrolled on a taught postgraduate programme, usually an MA), PGR (for individuals applying for or enrolled on a research based postgraduate programme, usually a PhD), Postdoc/Early Career (funding specifically targeted at individuals who are within a few years of having completed their PhD – and often below a certain age threshold), Academic (for established academics, usually in post), Emeritus (for those who have retired from an academic post). Where more than one of these categories is eligible, the spreadsheet again states 'Various'.

6. UK SPECIFIC

This is marked as 'Yes' if the funding requires the individual applying to be either a UK resident or attending a UK institution. This column was previously labelled 'UK/EU specific', but due to Brexit, EU students no longer qualify automatically for 'Home/EU' course fees. This change has also affected some important sources of support, most notably the Erasmus scheme that encourages undergraduate mobility around the EU, which has been replaced in the UK with lower funding for the Turing scheme. However, the situation may be different in relation to certain funders, such as private foundations. It is important that EU citizens check carefully the specific eligibility requirements of schemes listed in the funding spreadsheet.

7. CHINA/HONG KONG TO UK

This column is marked as 'Yes' if the funding is aimed at bringing scholars from China or Hong Kong to the UK. Research for this update has not identified any funding specifically to bring scholars or students from Taiwan, although such applicants are usually eligible for general 'international' funding.

8. UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC

This column indicates funding that is only available to individuals attending or applying to (a) specific institution(s). If the restriction is to a single institution or a small specific group, they

are named in this column; if the funding is available to a larger group of institutions, the column is simply marked as 'Yes'.

9. WEBSITE

This column provides the relevant web address for the funding in question. These have been checked in August 2021 to ensure that all web links remain active at time of writing, although as noted above, the funding situation is currently in a greater than usual state of flux due to Brexit, Covid and the resulting economic and policy impacts, and some sites may be taken down or the addresses changed as a consequence.

THE FACE OF FUNDING

In light of the updated survey, a few observations about the state of China focused funding can be made. There is a range of funding available specifically for Chinese studies, including funding for PhD and Masters studentships; research projects and fellowships for established and early career scholars/postdocs; research expenses and fieldwork; arranging or attending conferences, seminars and lecture series; and for language work and internships. There continues to be a further set of opportunities, usually discipline based, that are not specifically China related, but to which students or scholars of Chinese studies can apply, for instance, from the British Educational Research Association (BERA) or the Royal Geographical Society (RGS). Meanwhile, the China Scholarship Council (CSC) continues to provide generous funding for PRC scholars and students to conduct research abroad, as well as funding UK students to study in China. Major UK schemes such as the Newton Fund have also brought international scholars – sometimes specifically including China – to the UK, while foundation and university scholarships directed at students coming from China seem to be gradually on the increase.

PRC FUNDING

The China Scholarships Council (CSC) and Hanban provide the most funding for the inflow of scholars and PhD students from China, and for UK students travelling to the PRC for language training or degree study at all levels. Several UK universities have joint projects with the CSC to provide a large total number of scholarships for Chinese students studying for UK degrees. In addition, PRC academics and to some extent PhD students are now strongly incentivised or required to spend a period as a visiting fellow in a university outside the PRC, and these trips are funded by the CSC.

In the other direction, in 2013-14 CSC gave scholarships to 151 UK students and Hanban awarded a further 88.¹ Since then the numbers have expanded, but the CSC publicises scholarships awarded by individual institutions rather than the overall figures. The CSC application process has been notoriously complicated and opaque, and although the web address now leads to a somewhat more helpful webpage, it includes a list of 41 documents to get through in order to complete an application and scholarship.² Thus it requires particular determination to make it through the requirements, but once that is achieved, the scholarship benefits are quite generous, and there is a readiness to support continuation from one level of study to the next. Several individual universities in China also offer their own scholarships to foreign students, which have not been included here but are worthy of note.

¹ Correspondence with the Education Section of the Chinese embassy in London, August and September 2013.

² Some are guidance documents, but these are mixed in with key application forms without differentiation.

TAIWAN FUNDING

Taiwan has for decades provided language scholarships through the Ministry of Education. The Huayu Enrichment Scholarships (HES) are a global programme to encourage students from around the world to move to Taiwan for a period to study Mandarin. In the UK, this scholarship continues to be administered by BACS. For the last few years the competition has offered scholarships for 2, 3, 6 or 9 months. In the most recent available figures, for Summer 2019, BACS recommended the award of a total of 55 scholarships amounting to 216 months of study, and including 24 two-month scholarships and 5 nine-month scholarships. The 2020 cohort were not able to go to Taiwan that summer due to the pandemic. Thanks to Taiwan's effective handling of Covid, the 2021 cohort are commencing their studies at time of writing.

For scholars, the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation (CCKF) has since the 1990s provided a range of Chinese studies research and conference funding, and at times also institutional support. Currently the Foundation offers short term research grants, database grants, conference and seminar grants, lecture series grants, publication subsidies, writing-up fellowships for PhD students, postdoctoral fellowships, and dissertation fellowships for ROC students abroad. The webpage notes that the Foundation will give priority to collaborative projects with counterparts in Taiwan. CCKF also funds a library travel grant administered by the European Association for Chinese Studies (EACS). The most recently published statistics are for 2017-18, when the Foundation's awards to those based in the UK included 6 research grants, 7 doctoral fellowships (and 2 more on the reserve list), and 1 postdoctoral fellowship (with 1 more on the reserve list). In 2016-17, UK based recipients were awarded 6 research grants, 7 doctoral fellowships (plus 2 reserves) and 2 postdoctoral fellowships.³

The Taiwan government also provides funding for postgraduate study or research fellowships in Taiwan. Complete figures for the current range of scholarships are not available. However, according to their published figures, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not award any Taiwan Fellowships to UK recipients in 2021, but did give 2 in 2020, 3 in 2019, 4 in 2018, 5 in 2017, 3 in 2016, 5 in 2015, 3 in 2014, and 3 in 2013.⁴

Taiwan recently announced its ambition to become a bilingual country by 2030, unveiling a new set of programmes run by the Ministries of Education and of Foreign Affairs to bring many more English speakers to work on the island. It remains to be seen what impact these new ventures will have on the availability of funding for those who wish to study Chinese or to research topics in Chinese studies.

UK GOVERNMENT AND EU FUNDING

As anticipated in last year's update, the UK's departure from the EU has affected funding opportunities for China related study from the UK Government and the EU, though in different and sometimes unexpected ways for each.

After a period of uncertainty, it was confirmed on Christmas Eve 2020 that the UK government would make the financial contributions to the European Research Council (ERC) necessary for UK scholars and institutions to continue to participate fully in ERC programmes, including as Principal Investigators.⁵ In the meantime, however, the BBC

³ Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, 'Grant Recipients', <http://www.cckf.org/en/programs/recipients> (accessed 23 August 2021).

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of China, 'Taiwan Fellowship Fellows', <http://taiwanfellowship.ncl.edu.tw/eng/scholar.aspx> (accessed 23 August 2021).

⁵ 'Q&A on the UK's participation in Horizon Europe', [ec_rtd_uk-participation-in-horizon-europe.pdf](#); 'UK based researchers can now apply for new ERC grants',

reported that the percentage of Horizon funding being awarded to UK led projects fell from 16% in 2015 to just 11% in 2018.⁶ There were also a number of anecdotal reports of UK researchers being removed from EU research teams by colleagues on the European mainland who were concerned that their UK partners would become ineligible for ERC funding.⁷ While it is not known if anyone in Chinese studies was affected in this way, we should note that UK colleagues in the field have led or participated in several major ERC projects in recent years, including '[Communication and Empire: Chinese Empires in Comparative Perspective](https://chinese-empire.eu/)' (Leiden University and Kings College London), and '[China, Law and Development: An interdisciplinary study of the nature of order underlying China's globalism](https://cld.web.ox.ac.uk/home#)' (Oxford and colleagues in several EU and other countries).⁸ The extent to which this kind of UK participation in ERC schemes will recover to pre-referendum levels is unknown, while the wider impact of how Brexit will affect research funding in the longer term, particularly in areas outside the sciences, remains unclear. At the very least the more stringent immigration rules for EU citizens could put a damper of extra bureaucracy on collaborations with other European colleagues, and make such cooperation more expensive. On a webpage that is no longer accessed by the original link, the UK research councils emphasised their intention to continue to strengthen relationships with partners in countries such as China, but the new page content states no specific goals in this respect.⁹

This survey did not reveal any UK government funding open to all researchers for the specific study of, or research exchange with, China. Worth mentioning, however, is the Newton Fund, launched in 2014 and ending in 2021. The Fund aimed to build research and innovation partnerships with countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to support economic development and social welfare, tackle global challenges and develop talent and careers. The fund most recently focussed on: equitable partnerships with middle-income countries; multidisciplinary research based on agreed national strategies; nurturing talent and careers with capacity development. Originally consisting of £75 million each year for 5 years, this was extended from 2019 to 2021 and was to be doubled to £150 million by 2021. The programme required funding to be matched by recipient countries, which in the early years numbered fifteen, including China. UK partners for Newton Fund projects included the British Academy, the Royal Society, the British Council, and the research councils. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences was one of the overseas partners. The partners offered PhD programmes, training support, researcher links and fellowships with partner countries.¹⁰

The Newton Fund was counted as part of the UK's aid spending, and the Fund's further renewal was thus thrown into doubt in November 2020 by the government's reduction of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget from 0.7 to 0.5% of Gross National

https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/93992/uk-based-researchers-can-now-apply-new-erc-grants_my (both accessed 20 August 2021).

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-50044659> (accessed 24 August 2021).

⁷ For example, from 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/jul/12/uk-scientists-dropped-from-eu-projects-because-of-post-brexit-funding-fears> (accessed 20 August 2021).

⁸ '[Communication and Empire: Chinese Empires in Comparative Perspective](https://chinese-empire.eu/)', <https://chinese-empire.eu/>, '[China, Law and Development: An interdisciplinary study of the nature of order underlying China's globalism](https://cld.web.ox.ac.uk/home#)', <https://cld.web.ox.ac.uk/home#> (both accessed 31 August 2021).

⁹ Research Councils UK, 'RCUK Statement on International Collaboration post EU Referendum', <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/160706/> (originally accessed 16 August 2016; the content is different as of 23 August 2021. The original statement is still available on a number of external sites, including <https://confap.org.br/news/rcuk-statement-on-international-collaboration-post-eu-referendum/>).

¹⁰ Newton Fund, 'About us', www.newtonfund.ac.uk/about/ (accessed 24 August 2021).

Income (GNI).¹¹ This move was explained as being due to the economic repercussions of the Covid pandemic, but was in breach of a legal commitment to this target. The cut almost halved the budget of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), which disburses funds to the research councils. The shortfall was £120m, the same amount spent by the Newton Fund in the calendar year 2018.¹² In March 2021 UKRI (itself in the middle of a major restructure) was forced to reduce or cease funding to a number of working projects currently in receipt of grants from the Newton Fund's sister programme directed towards lower income countries, the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF), causing considerable disruption and sometimes hardship to those in partner countries who were employed on grant funding.¹³ It was clear that in these circumstances the Newton Fund could not be renewed.

Turning to ongoing programmes linked to China study, the Chevening Programme brought 89 scholars from China to the UK in 2012/13.¹⁴ Starting in 2019/20, Chevening in China has been partnering with the N8 Research Partnership of northern English universities (Durham, Leeds, Newcastle) to dramatically expand the number of Chinese students being offered scholarships to study in the region.¹⁵ The British Council's Generation UK programme started in 2013. It sent 80 students to study in China in 2013/14, and offered over 100 places for the year 2014/15.¹⁶ In 2017, numbers had increased to over 10,000 and it was hoped that by 2020, the scheme would have reached over 80,000 UK students.¹⁷ Unfortunately the scheme was suspended for 2020-21 due to Covid, but it appears that the funding remains in place and that the scheme will resume once travel to China becomes practical again.

EU students have provided a steady flow of Erasmus and postgraduate students pursuing topics in Chinese studies in the UK, drawn by the range of PGT courses, by particular PhD supervisors, and in some cases by the relative lack of Chinese studies capacity in their home country. The academy in Spain, for instance, is fairly new in the field of Chinese studies, and some have accordingly sought postgraduate training abroad, including in the UK. It is unclear whether the UK will continue to benefit from such students when they have to pay international fees.

CHARITIES AND CHARITABLE TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

The original 2013 report found that some charities involved with funding China studies and Chinese students had been affected by the financial downturn. The 2016 version noted that some charities had ceased to operate or were making fewer grants available. Charities making awards to international students and for study and research on China were among those affected, including the Sir Shiu King Tang Educational Trust (administered by the

¹¹ 'Reducing the UK's aid spending in 2021', <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9224/> (accessed 20 August 2021).

¹² BEIS, *Newton Fund and Global Challenges Research Fund Annual Report 2018–2019*, [beis-oda-annual-report-2018-19.pdf](https://www.beis.gov.uk/media/1012221/newton-fund-and-global-challenges-research-fund-annual-report-2018-19.pdf), p. 30.

¹³ William Worley, 'Tracking the UK's controversial aid cuts', <https://www.devex.com/news/tracking-the-uk-s-controversial-aid-cuts-99883> (accessed 23 August 2021).

¹⁴ FCO, 'Chevening in China', <http://www.chevening.org/china/> (accessed 17 May 2013; as of 24 August the page content has changed).

¹⁵ FCDO, 'Chevening in China', <https://www.chevening.org/scholarship/china/> (accessed 24 August 2021).

¹⁶ Correspondence with British Council Beijing, April 2015.

¹⁷ British Council, 'About Generation UK', <https://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/programmes/education/generation-uk/about> (accessed 24 August 2021).

British Council) and the Hammond Trust, intended to give financial aid to students from Asia.¹⁸

The overall situation among charitable trusts has improved in the intervening years with reports of a steady increase in both revenue and grants awarded since the low point in 2013 when this report was first commissioned. The most recent report on foundation (or trust) giving trends by the Association of Charitable Foundations, from 2019, shows that grants awarded in 2017/18 by foundations or trusts in the UK amounted to £6.5 billion and, if the huge Wellcome Trust is excluded, grants by the Top 300 Foundations showed a real increase of 9.9% over the previous year. The Wellcome is a valuable fund for those working in the History of Medicine and its awards fell to £349 million compared with £845 million the previous year (2018). However, this was chiefly due to accidents of timing, and overall the Trust is heading for an increased average spend of over £1 billion a year. Since the Trust has investments in pharmaceutical companies, it may benefit from global Covid vaccination programmes, with knock-on effects on the availability of funding in its areas of interest.¹⁹

While the effect of this increased spending (or extra availability of funds) on grants awarded to Chinese studies in particular is difficult to gauge, there are some charitable trusts that are worth looking at in a little more detail. The Universities' China Committee in London (UCCL) administers the remains of Britain's share of the Boxer Indemnity (1900), which it uses to provide funding for PhD students undertaking China focussed research in China, and also in support of research exchanges for UK- or China-based academics working on China focussed topics. 2017/18 saw the UCCL gain approximately 10% in revenue with a decrease of over 30% in spending, but this is largely accounted for in the above average spend that the charity made in 2017. The more usual pattern was seen in 2018/19, with income of £73,610 and expenditure of £120,680, and in 2019/20, when the trust had £71,440 of income and spent £104,670, which was rather less than the previous year.²⁰ The UCCL's accounting year runs from June to May, so the 2019/20 reduction may reflect to some extent the period of lockdown from March 2020 that removed the usual opportunities for the kind of activities that UCCL funds, such as research trips, so that some grants awarded may not have been claimed. If this were the case, we could expect to see a still lower grant spend in 2020/21. Over the longer term, the consistently greater expenditure than income reflects the fact that the trust is spending out its endowment.

A more substantial funder of UK-China research and exchange is the Sino-British Fellowship Trust (SBFT), which pays out annual grants in the region of £500k a year to support China related research and study. The SBFT has longstanding funding arrangements with several UK based institutions including the British Academy and SOAS, and helps to fund scholars from mainland China and Hong Kong to travel to the UK for study and research, and vice versa, as well as supporting Chinese language study.²¹ In 2018 the SBFT awarded individual grants totalling of £52,716 and another £417,100 to institutions, much of which was also passed on to individuals, and in 2019, the most recent year for which records are available, gave £63,061 to individuals and £373,970 to institutions, for a slightly decreased total

¹⁸ Correspondence with The Hammond Trust, 20 April 2015.

¹⁹ Tim Schwab, 'Covid-19, trust, and Wellcome: how charity's pharma investments overlap with its research efforts', *BMJ*, 372: n556, <https://web.archive.org/web/20210320113021/https://www.bmj.com/content/372/bmj.n556>.

²⁰ Charity Commission for England and Wales, <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/314133/financial-history> (accessed 24 August 2021).

²¹ The British Academy, 'Sino-British Fellowship Trust', <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/supporters/sino-british-fellowship-trust/> (accessed 24 August 2021).

(£437,031 as against £469,816 in 2018).²² These changes may suggest a slight shift towards more individual than institutional funding but could also be attributable to the loss of or reductions in institutional grants.

UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS AND DISCOUNTS

The survey shows that universities rarely offer full postgraduate scholarships specific to a China focussed course, whether doctoral or masters level, and at time of writing there appears to be just one, the Louis Cha scholarship for research on dynastic China, established in 2015 at St John's College, Cambridge.²³ It seems that the scholarship will support one student at any given time and will therefore be offered once every three years, with the next available place just filled for October 2021.

Most postgraduate funding from universities offers a contribution towards fees or sometimes also living costs, and does not specify a subject area, with rare exceptions for Chinese studies at, for instance, SOAS and Oxford. Sometimes this funding is for all comers, sometimes for UK students, and sometimes is targeted at international students. Since the international fees paid by Chinese students are so high, international or general scholarships, while they can give important assistance to those intending to come to the UK to study anyway, nevertheless defray only part of the substantial costs of study here. They are thus also a recruitment tool for universities, acting as encouragements in the decision making process rather than offering any meaningful number of funded places. Scholarships specific to a university but open to all courses are not systematically listed in the table.

Universities are also likely to have internal funding available to current students and researchers, but this has also not been systematically listed here.

CORPORATE FUNDERS

Historical links and new fundraising activities mean that corporate funders are providing opportunities. Santander, for example, is in partnership with 86 UK universities; each university allocates funding differently, but in general they provide grants for travel and study, including funding for those engaged in China focused research.²⁴ Financial groups such as Jardine Matheson continue to fund scholarships to the UK for Chinese students.

IN CONCLUSION

There remain significant sources of funding for study and research on China related topics, but there is never enough to meet demand, most especially for taught Masters (PGT) courses and language training. This year's survey shows that some universities are offering greater support for PGT (and to some extent PGR) study, but a common complaint is that it is never certain how long such schemes will be continued, which makes it hard to plan or predict. The generic nature of this kind of funding means that those working on China related studies have to face more competition, but at the same time there is growing general

²² The Trustees, 'The Sino-British Fellowship Trust: Report and Financial Statements' (2019), downloadable from <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5106297> (accessed 24 August 2021).

²³ St John's College, 'The Louis Cha Scholarship', <http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/louis-cha-scholarship> (accessed 24 August 2021).

²⁴ For more details see Santander, 'Santander Partner Universities', <http://www.santander.co.uk/uk/santander-universities/about-us/our-partner-universities/> (accessed 24 August 2021).

recognition – including among those who determine the recipients of generic funding – of the importance of studying China related topics. China is no longer a niche subject.

The several shocks of the last twelve months from Brexit and Covid have left their mark on funding opportunities, and we might have to settle for relief that the situation is not worse. UK researchers are still eligible to apply for ERC funds, but the higher student fees and more strenuous immigration regime for EU citizens seems likely to make collaborations with EU colleagues less seamless and more expensive, for those in Chinese studies as in other subjects. At home the halving of UKRI resources cannot but make grant success even more elusive, and the loss of the Newton Fund removes a sizeable source of assistance that specifically included China in its remit.

While Taiwan remains a steady and valuable source of accessible funding at several levels, it would be wise for researchers on China related topics to give some thought to the potential implications of what is beginning to be a growing reliance on PRC resources. In the UK, the spending of charitable trusts specific to Chinese studies is down, while the Wellcome seems likely to have more money available than ever before, although this can only benefit a small subgroup within the China related research field as a whole.

Overall, the picture is not entirely unhelpful. Generic sources of funding have been damaged in several ways by external shocks, but we can at least say that in these cases Chinese studies is no worse off than other subject areas. Specific funding for China related work continues much as it has in the past, with the lower spends of the last couple of years having specific explanations. Grants from these funds will be given when there are applicants who are able to complete their projects, and projects such as Generation UK expect to resume activity once travel to China becomes more possible. Perhaps the most important need is to raise awareness of the various sources of funding that do exist for China related work at all levels, a goal which this reports aims to further.