

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

**The British Association for Chinese Studies**



October 2020

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.

The original content of this UCCL-commissioned report, which is owned and updated by the British Association for Chinese Studies, may be used provided that the source and authorship is acknowledged.

Should you wish to inform BACS of any information that may be missing from the report, or of any corrections, please contact the BACS web manager through the BACS website (<http://bacsuk.org.uk/>). Suggested changes will normally be incorporated in the next version of the report.

Original report: Tracey Fallon

Previous report (2016): Pamela Hunt

Report updated for 2018/19 by Jonathan Dugdale

Report updated for 2019/20 by Barclay Bram

# CONTENTS:

Funding in UK for higher level non-scientific China-related studies.....	1
Executive Summary:.....	3
Aims: .....	4
Sources: .....	4
The 2018/19 Funding Table: .....	6
1. Funding Title: .....	6
2. Funder/Administrator: .....	6
3. Funding Type: .....	6
4. China/Asian Studies Specific: .....	6
5. Academic Level: .....	6
6. UK/EU Specific: .....	6
7. China/Hong Kong to UK:.....	6
8. University Specific: .....	7
9. Website: .....	7
The Face of Funding.....	8
PRC Funding.....	8
UK Government and EU Funding .....	8
Taiwan Funding.....	10
Charities and Charitable Trusts and Foundations .....	11
University Scholarships and Discounts.....	12
Corporate Funders.....	12

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- 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.
- An internet search of leading funding bodies, charities and databases was conducted in mid-2020. The results have been compiled into a new spreadsheet format to make searching for relevant funding opportunities easier.
- The survey shows that the funding available to students and researchers in Chinese studies covers a range of activities, but the number of opportunities is limited. The funding comes from government organizations, research bodies, charitable organizations, and corporations.
- Also listed are funding opportunities that are not specific to Chinese-focused research, for which the competition will be great. There are also sources of funding which have highly specific eligibility criteria, but which some researchers within the broad spectrum of 'Chinese studies' might plausibly apply for. Relevant prizes and awards are included for a range of different career stages.
- Post-Brexit funding: three years on from the referendum and answers as to how Brexit will ultimately affect research funding in the long term remain unanswered. While funding in many areas has already decreased, the full impact will likely only be felt after the UK leaves the EU. There remains scepticism that the UK Government will be capable of matching the funding that may be lost from European Research Councils and other major funding bodies that operate within the bloc.
- There are currently more relevant opportunities for funding available to both students and academics from Scotland than the rest of the UK, with funding available from the Scottish Government, as well as from the Scottish Educational Trust and the Royal Society of Edinburgh among others.
- 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.
- Taiwan also has provides some reliable, though far smaller, programmes for Chinese Studies through the Ministry for Education, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation.
- Corporate funders also provide scholarship funding, limited to specific universities and courses.
- Charitable trusts have demonstrated year-on-year growth since this report was first commissioned in 2013 (both in assets and grants given) in the UK. Signs of this growth are being witnessed in Chinese studies funding this year, with increased spending by both the UCCL and SBFT.
- Available funding for students coming from the PRC and Hong Kong to study in the UK continues to increase. The majority of this funding remains reserved for MA and PhD students.

## 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 and Hong Kong to come 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 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 within 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, but not Taiwan. Funding related to 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 time for this survey was examining educational trusts to see if their coverage included Chinese-studies research or funding for overseas Chinese students. Potential funders were identified, their annual reports reviewed, and if the scope was not clear they were approached by email and/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 any new additions to the funding landscape (as well as ensure that all of the web links remain active).

For postgraduate funding, scholarship databases including Postgraduate Studentships ([postgraduatestudentships.co.uk](http://postgraduatestudentships.co.uk)); The Scholarship Hub ([www.thescholarship.org.uk](http://www.thescholarship.org.uk)); Scholarship Search (<http://www.scholarship-search.org.uk/>); Scholarships4Development (<http://www.scholars4dev.com/>); were searched for terms "China" and "Chinese". Individual university websites were also checked. All relevant links were followed up.

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 students or 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. A further limitation of the survey is in internal funding. Researchers may have internal funding available to them 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 for existing students and staff at an institution have been limited to just those that have a specific China focus. The survey does not include awards that are dependent on a student or researcher accepting a position outside of the UK. A further exclusion from the results is short-term funding, such as funds related to a one-off call for research proposals.

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 for UK-based students, researchers and institutions with a China-specific focus; 2) Non China-specific funding but for which UK based Chinese-studies areas students, researchers and institutions could apply; 3) Non China-specific funding with a narrow scope which UK based Chinese-studies area researchers and students could apply; 4) Prizes and Awards; 5) Funding for Chinese students and scholars for study and research in the UK.

This year the approach to the presentation of the data has been changed with the objective of making it easier for those accessing it to find funding that is relevant to their specific needs. The results have therefore been compiled into a single spreadsheet that is available as a separate file.

## THE 2019/20 FUNDING TABLE:

The new spreadsheet table for this year's survey has been included as a separate, searchable document to make it easier to find relevant funding opportunities for 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 title of the funder and/or administrator of the fund in question.

### 3. FUNDING TYPE:

The available funding has currently been divided into ten different funding types: Competition/Prize (any competitions, awards and prizes with some form of financial reward) , Research/Fellowship (fellowships and grants for individual research), Scholarship (any funding for students to help complete their studies), Conference/Travel (funds to cover travel costs or attend conferences abroad), Project (funding for a specific individual or group research project), Fieldwork (funding to attend a fieldwork project – funding to start your own fieldwork project would be listed under 'Projects'), Internship (funding for a aid internship), Institutional Funding (funding for universities to assist in developing a department or hiring new staff), Outreach (funding specifically targeted at public facing projects), and Publication (financial support for the completion of a monograph or article intended for publication). While there may be some crossover between these categories, the table has also included another category entitled 'various' for funding schemes that meet the requirements of multiple of the aforementioned categories.

### 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 that the funding is aimed at. This has been divided into six different categories: Undergraduate (for individuals applying for or currently enrolled on an undergraduate degree course), Postgrad/PhD (for individuals applying for or enrolled on a taught or research based postgraduate programme), 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),

### 6. UK/EU SPECIFIC:

This column is marked as 'Yes' if the funding requires the individual applying to be either an EU/UK resident or attending an EU/UK institution.

### 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.

#### 8. UNIVERSITY SPECIFIC:

This column is for funding that is only available to individuals attending or applying for a specific institution(s). If it is a single institution, the name is given in this column and if the funding is available to a specific 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 will be checked each year that the report is maintained to ensure that all web links remain active.

## THE FACE OF FUNDING

Following the 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 studentships; research projects; lectureships; fieldwork; arranging or attending conferences and seminars; and for language work.

### PRC FUNDING

Funding from the China Scholarships Council and Hanban provide the most funding for the in-flow of Chinese PhD students, and for UK students travelling to China for language training or study. Programmes to fund researchers, conference organisation or publication are also available. For the academic year 2013-14, 151 UK students were recipients of Chinese Scholarship Council scholarships and an additional 88 UK students received Hanban scholarships.<sup>1</sup> Hanban has extended its funding available to students and scholars since this survey was first conducted in 2013, now offering more for travel grants, PhD fellowships, and conference grants. Several individual universities in China also offer scholarships to foreign students; these have not been included here but are worthy of note.

Several universities have joint projects with the China Scholarship Council providing scholarships for Chinese students at institutions in the UK. This is an area that is still witnessing year-on-year growth, with hundreds of places available for postgraduate study at universities including the Oxford, UCL, Nottingham, Bristol, Sheffield, York Cardiff and Edinburgh.

### UK GOVERNMENT AND EU FUNDING

With regards to funding for China-related study from the UK Government and the EU, the outcome of the Brexit referendum in June 2016 will naturally have an impact on the amount, scope and longevity of funding available. At the time of writing, it is too soon to tell how Brexit will affect UK government and EU funding in the future. However, Research Councils UK (RCUK) have stated that while the UK remains a full member of the EU there will be no immediate change for those applying to, or participating in, such programmes as Horizon 2020. RCUK will honour existing funding commitments through EU-funded programmes. Equally, EU students studying in the UK and eligible for funding from RCUK will remain eligible for study commencing in 2016, and will continue to receive funding for the duration of their courses. According to the RCUK, future funding arrangements, and partnerships with EU bodies, will be determined as part of the UK's discussions on its future relationship with the EU. RCUK have also emphasised their

---

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



intention to continue to strengthen partnerships with partners in countries such as China.<sup>2</sup>

Turning to existing programmes linked to China study, The Chevening Programme brought 89 scholars from China to the UK in 2012/13.<sup>3</sup> Next year, for 2019/20, Chevening in China is going to partner with the N8 Research Partnership of northern English universities to dramatically expand the number of Chinese students being offered scholarships to study in the region.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup> In 2017, numbers had increased to over 10,000 and it is hoped that by 2020, that the scheme will have reached over 80,000 UK students.<sup>6</sup>

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 is the Newton Fund, which was launched in 2014 and focuses on increasing capacity in science and innovation; facilitating research collaborations on development topics; and strengthening innovation systems. Originally consisting of £75 million each year for 5 years, this was extended from 2019 to 2021 and will be doubled to £150 million by 2021. The fund is delivered through UK delivery partners including the British Academy, the Royal Society, the British Council, and Research councils, and they offer PhD programs, training support, researcher links and fellowships with partner countries. The first years of the Fund will cover 15 countries, including China. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences is one of the overseas partners.<sup>7</sup>

While the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme has been highlighted in previous editions of this survey as a basis for opportunities to collaborate with Chinese partners, the UK's possible exit from the EU is likely to have a significant impact on the possibility of future UK based applications to the programme.<sup>8</sup> An official government response was released in August 2019 stating that the UK Government will guarantee all of the successful bids that have already been made to Horizon 2020 prior to the UK's exit to the EU. Provision has also reportedly been made for UK based project co-ordinators to still be able to apply as a 'Third Country Participant' within the scheme but

---

<sup>2</sup> Research Councils UK, *RCUK Statement on International Collaboration post EU Referendum*, <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/media/news/160706/> (accessed 16 August 2016).

<sup>3</sup> FCO (2012) Chevening in China (website) <http://www.chevening.org/china/> (accessed 17 May 2013).

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.chevening.org/scholarship/china/> (accessed September 2019).

<sup>5</sup> Correspondence with British Council Beijing, April 2015.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.britishcouncil.cn/en/programmes/education/generation-uk/about> (accessed September 2019)

<sup>7</sup> Newton Fund, *About us*, [www.newtonfund.ac.uk/about/](http://www.newtonfund.ac.uk/about/) (accessed 16 August 2016).

<sup>8</sup> Calls and topics targeting China and specifically seeking Chinese participation in 2015/16 are available from The European Commission, *Calls and Topics Targeting China*, [http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020\\_localsupp\\_china\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020_localsupp_china_en.pdf) (accessed 16 August 2016). Note that these calls anticipate an integrated approach which include humanities and social sciences. See The European Commission, *Social Sciences & Humanities* <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/area/social-sciences-humanities> (accessed 16 August 2016).

no further details have been given.<sup>9</sup> With this uncertainty, the BBC have reported that the percentage of Horizon funding being awarded to UK led projects has fallen from 16% in 2015 to just 11% in 2018.<sup>10</sup> In 2020 this is still unclear and a government guidance issued in January was removed as of 13 March 2020<sup>11</sup> and there is still no clear answer as to what the future holds for this fund.

The wider impact of how Brexit will affect research funding, particularly in areas outside of the sciences remains unclear. A recent report by the Royal Society has indicated that the number of European scholars taking up fellowships in the UK has decreased by around 35% and that UK science funding has so far lost out on approximately £440 million per year in funding since 2016.<sup>12</sup> In a speech to the British Academy published on the 9<sup>th</sup> October 2019, the Science Minister, Chris Skidmore, stated that 'no-deal guarantees' were now in place for both Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+ that would ensure that the UK Treasury would set aside funds to underwrite both schemes regardless of how the UK ends up leaving the EU.<sup>13</sup> No such guarantees, however, have yet been forthcoming for European Research Council funding in the humanities and there remains significant doubt as to how successful a UK based alternative could be as a replacement.<sup>14</sup>

## TAIWAN FUNDING

Taiwan's official institutions also provide a range of opportunities. Funds are available for language study, degree study, and research visits for UK based students and scholars. These include studies focused on mainland China, and therefore have been included here.

Complete figures for the range of scholarships are not available. However, according to their published figures, the MOFA Taiwan fellowship awarded 3 fellowships to the UK in 2019, 4 in 2018, 5 in 2017, 3 in 2016, 5 in 2015, 3 in 2014, and 3 in 2013.<sup>15</sup> The Chiang Ching-Kuo foundation offers fellowships, lectureship grants and short-term research grants, as well as a library travel grant administered by the European Association for Chinese Studies (EACS). The most recently published statistics remain from 2015/16 when the CCKF awarded 11 separate grants to UK-based scholars. The

---

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/horizon-2020-funding-after-brexit> (accessed September 2019).

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-50044659> (accessed October 2019).

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/horizon-2020-funding-if-theres-no-brexit-deal/horizon-2020-funding-if-theres-no-brexit-deal--2>

<sup>12</sup> <https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/brexit-uk-science/> (accessed October 2019).

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-future-of-international-research-collaboration> (accessed October 2019).

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/good-luck-it-damning-verdict-uks-erc-alternative-plan> (accessed October 2019).

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of China, *Taiwan Fellowship Fellows*, <http://taiwanfellowship.ncl.edu.tw/eng/scholar.aspx> (accessed September 2019).

total amount granted to scholars at UK institutions over the period 2013-16 averages at just over 160,000 Euro per annum.<sup>16</sup>

The Huayu Enrichment scheme is a global programme to encourage students from around the world to move to Taiwan for 6-12 months to study Mandarin. In the UK, this scholarship continues to be administered by BACS.

## CHARITIES AND CHARITABLE TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS

A 2013 version of this report found that some charities involved with funding China studies and Chinese students had been affected by the financial downturn. In the 2016 version, it was noted that some charities ceased to operate or were making fewer grants available. Charities making awards to overseas students and for the study and research of China were amongst those affected including the Sir Shiu King Tang Educational Trust (administered by the British Council) and the Hammond Trust, intended to give financial aid to students from Asia.<sup>17</sup>

The overall situation among charitable trusts has improved in the intervening years with charitable trusts reporting a steady increase in both revenue and grants awarded since the low point in 2013 when this report was first commissioned. A 2018 report by the Association of Charitable Foundations (the 2019 report is yet to be released) shows that grants awarded by charitable foundations within the UK increased during this period by almost 50% from approximately £2.2 billion in 2013 to approximately £3.2 billion in 2017. Overall, 2017 saw a 8.2% increase in grants awarded with 63% of all charitable trusts increasing their spending on the previous year.<sup>18</sup>

While the effect of this increased spending 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 provides funding for PhD students undertaking China-focused research in China and also in support of research exchanges for lecturers and academics on China-focused topics. 2018 saw the UCCL gain approximately 10% in revenue but a decrease in over 30% in spending, however, this is largely accounted for in the above average spend that the charity made in 2017.

A more substantial funder of UK-China research and exchange is the Sino-British Fellowship Trust (SBFT). While the SBFT's total spending dropped in 2009 by a difference of over £120,000 from 2008, by 2010 the SBFT were again contributing over half a million pounds and continue to support China related research and study year on year. The SBFT has long-standing endowments with several UK based institutions including the British Library and supports scholars from mainland China and Hong Kong to travel to the UK for study and research. In the previous version of this report from

---

<sup>16</sup> Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation for International Scholarly Exchange, *Grant Recipients*, <http://www.cckf.org/en/programs/european> (accessed 16 August 2016).

<sup>17</sup> Correspondence with The Hammond Trust, April 20 2015.

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.acf.org.uk/downloads/publications/ACF147\\_Foundation\\_Giving\\_Trends\\_2018\\_For\\_web\\_spreads.pdf](https://www.acf.org.uk/downloads/publications/ACF147_Foundation_Giving_Trends_2018_For_web_spreads.pdf) (accessed September 2019).

2016, it was noted that in 2015, the SBFT spent £478,489.<sup>19</sup> That spending has since increased again to £585,568 for the 2018/19 tax year. For 2019/20 this slightly dipped to £572,871.

## UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS AND DISCOUNTS

The survey shows some universities that offer full postgraduate scholarships specific to a Chinese-focused course, for example at SOAS and the University of Oxford. There is likely also to be internal funding available to current students and researchers; this has not been listed here. Also not listed are scholarships specific to a university but open to all courses.

With regards to postgraduate funding specifically for Chinese studies, the previous version of this report recognised the newly announced Louis Cha scholarship for research on dynastic China in 2015 at St John's College of the University of Cambridge.<sup>20</sup> At the time of writing that report, it was unclear if the scholarship would be offered yearly or less frequently but it seems that the scholarship will only be supporting one student at any given time and will therefore be offered once every three years with the next available place opening for applications to start in October 2021.<sup>21</sup>

Many of the scholarships for postgraduate study in the UK for Chinese students offered by Universities are tuition fee reduction scholarships. While these scholarships are a bonus to those intending to come to the UK to study anyway, they are also a recruitment tool for the University. The costs of study in the UK are so substantial that a small fee reduction is negligible and thus these scholarships act as encouragements in the decision-making process rather than funded places.

## CORPORATE FUNDERS

Historical links and new fundraising activities mean that corporate funders are providing opportunities. SOAS has been successful in receiving corporate funding for Masters places (See Funding Table 1). Additionally, Santander is in partnership with 77 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. Santander partnerships in some UK universities have also produced grants for students from China, as well as other countries.<sup>22</sup> Financial groups such as

---

<sup>19</sup> Figures include operating costs. "The Sino British Fellowship Trust (2014, 2013, 2012, 2011, 2010, 2009)" The Charity Commission Website, <http://apps.charitycommission.gov.uk/Showcharity/RegisterOfCharities/CharityWithoutPartB.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=313669&SubsidiaryNumber=0> (accessed 16 August 2016)

<sup>20</sup> St John's College, *The Louis Cha Scholarship*, <http://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/louis-cha-scholarship> (accessed 20 April 2015).

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.joh.cam.ac.uk/louis-cha-scholarship> (accessed September 2019)

<sup>22</sup> For more details see. "Santander Partner Universities", Santander, <http://www.santander.co.uk/uk/santander-universities/about-us/our-partner-universities/> (accessed 20 April 2015). For an example of grants available to PRC students, see "Oxford Santander Graduate Awards," Oxford Graduate Admissions,

Jardine continue to fund scholarships to the UK for Chinese students. (See Funding Table 4).

---

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/fees-and-funding/graduate-scholarships/university-wide-scholarships/santander-graduate-awards> (accessed 20 April 2015.)