English-medium Education in Higher Education China Research Partnership Grant

Call for applications

About the grant

The British Council is pleased to announce its call for applications for a grant of up to £30,000 to support research into the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) needs of teachers/ lecturers in English-medium in higher education (EMHE) contexts within China[[1]](#footnote-2). Through this grant we aim to facilitate the production of a high-quality academic research partnership that explores and identifies specific development needs of EMHE teachers in different disciplines.[[2]](#footnote-3) From insight gained a secondary output of practical utility and/or useful reference to teachers in guiding their CPD journey is also required. It is expected that the secondary output will offer a starting point for future local CPD material development that supports teachers in EMHE contexts

We ask that interested parties notify us of ‘intention to submit an application’ by **Monday 20 February, 00:59 UK time[[3]](#footnote-4).** The deadline to submit your final research proposal is **Thursday 23 February 2023, 23:59 UK time.** Notifications and applications should bereturned to: [elt@britishcouncil.org.cn](mailto:elt@britishcouncil.org.cn), Cc’ing [liang.junhong@britishcouncil.org.cn](mailto:liang.junhong@britishcouncil.org.cn)

**What is the purpose of the grant?**

This grant aims:

* To explore and identify the similarities and differences in CPD needs for teachers of different disciplines in English within Higher Education in China
* To promote a better understanding of the development needs, related to discipline, of EMHE teachers who use English as a language of learning and teaching (LoLT) in higher education in China.
* To provide greater insight and guidance for key EMHE stakeholders at institutional and government levels that can shape the development of effective future, discipline-specific, CPD materials and offers,
* To address identified needs through the creation of an output of practical utility and/or useful reference to teachers of one or more discipline in English within Higher Education in guiding their CPD journey.

Who may apply?

Any person resident in the UK with an affiliation to a UK higher educational institution. The award agreement will be with the institution and not with an individual. **Note**: Although the applicant must be resident in the UK, the research may, in whole or in part, take place outside the UK or by persons not resident in the UK.

Individual departments within a single institution can make multiple applications provided that the proposed activities and aims are clearly different and that each is led by separate lead applicants.

We welcome applications from cross-disciplinary research teams, including but not limited to specialists in EME in HE.

What is the scope of project?

The expected outputs are:

1. Primary output: a publishable research report that explores and identifies specific development needs teachers of different subject content in English within Higher Education in China
2. Secondary output: an output of practical reference and utility, underpinned by the primary output research, for teachers of different subject content in English within Higher Education in China.

Through partnership with a Chinese institution or organisation, ‘which must be either an existing one already held by the lead UK institution or a new one established by the UK institution for the purposes of this activity,’ the research seeks to examine the differences in CPD needs and requirements of EMHE teachers of different disciplines within the China Higher Education context. The expected audience of the research report are institutional leaders, academics, and policy makers in areas of CPD.

Other outputs of ‘practical reference and utility’ created in addition to the research findings should aim to support teaching practitioners, and should have wide application, and not be limited to use by a single institutional entity. Teachers will be the primary user/audience of this output. Note: This output needs to be accompanied by a clear dissemination plan for how it will be used by the target audience and shared among relevant stakeholders. This can be included within the application form provided.

The project can focus on the needs of teachers directly across a range of institutions, and could involve teachers across numerous, institutions of similar geography, status, size to garner wider insight, or it may choose to focus on a particular context and dig deeper within that context to establish principles of wider relevance.

Additionally, rather than focusing on courses that exclusively teach in English, often to foreign students, consideration of teachers who teach homogeneous groups of Chinese students in English, and who may code-switch or present bilingually, may also be possible within the selected disciplines. CPD needs are likely to include pedagogical needs, but these may also be language related, ICT related, or explore current knowledge of appropriate, available resources.

It is expected that this research will be able to build on existing research within the China EMHE context and access existing, publicly available data where required. It is understood that while the situation in China is changing, it remains challenging for activities to be in-person and may require remote access to data through surveys, interviews and focus groups, etc conducted online. Please refer to annex 4 and 5 for local insight reports on EMHE in China for suggested background reading.

Do I need to have an agreed partnership with a local Chinese institution(s) or organisation to carry out the research?

Yes. It is expected that this research will be led by a UK institution but designed and completed in partnership with an identified local Chinese partner. The role of a local partner is essential in providing and verifying contextual needs within the research subject areas, providing access to teachers from a national or regional network of universities for surveys and feedback, carrying out the work on the ground, and gaining future recognition from the sector during dissemination and application of the research outputs.

A Chinese partner should be identified within the application.

How can I apply?

Please complete and submit the following documents and CVs of the team(s) identified for participation in the project to [elt@britishcouncil.org.cn](mailto:elt@britishcouncil.org.cn), CC’ing [liang.junhong@britishcouncil.org.cn](mailto:liang.junhong@britishcouncil.org.cn) by **Thursday 23 February 2023, 23:59 UK time.**

1. Annex 1\_Application form
2. Annex 2\_Budget
3. Annex 6\_Eligibility Check list

What type of activity is outside the scheme?

* The research must not have already taken place or be underway.
* The research output / final report must be in English.
* Funding will be agreed for a maximum initial period of **12 months.**
* This scheme is not intended to fund the field work of individual Ph.D. candidates or similar.
* We define research as original investigation undertaken in order to gain knowledge and understanding.
* We define an output ‘of practical reference and utility’ as something that can be used directly by teachers to guide or support either their own Continuous Professional Development (CPD) or classroom practice.

**Gender**

The British Council seeks to support research that integrates gender throughout the project and is fully responsive to the differences and inequalities between women, girls and men and boys and other gender diverse groups within the context of EMHE. As a minimum, the research project undertaken as part of this grant should meet the OECD DAC gender equality policy marker of ‘significant’ (<https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/dac-gender-equality-marker.htm> ) and demonstrate the meaningful yet proportionate consideration as to how it might contribute to reducing gender inequalities as required by the 2014 International Development (Gender Equality) Act. Consideration may be demonstrated through project focus and inquiry or through the planned implementation and staffing of the project.

Selection process

You will have your response evaluated as set out below:

**Stage 1:** A check will be made to ensure all required documents have been provided according to the specifications. Incomplete or incorrect submissions will be disqualified and not evaluated further. Please refer to Annex 6 for Eligibility Check List.

**Stage 2:** The proposal will then be evaluated in accordance with the criteria and weightings set out below. If excluded at this point, they will not be evaluated further.

A British Council panel made will evaluate the proposals against the following criteria:

* Research focus, methodology and approach which clearly delineates the dimensions of the research, justifies planned outputs, and, where applicable, integrates gender into the methodology and approach (30%)
* Definition of the output of ‘practical reference and utility’, which clearly delineates its utility, proposed final form, potential for wider application, target audience, and future dissemination opportunities (30%)
* Knowledge of the sector, professional experience, qualifications, and competencies including but not limited to gender expertise. (20%)
* Value for money (20%)

We reserve the right to contact applicants to request or negotiate an amendment to any aspect of the proposal, for example budget items or project timeline, in order to best meet the objectives of the award.

**What amount of funding will be made?**

A grant in the region of **£30,000** will be made. The full value of the award, based on the proposal made, will be paid upon completion of relevant checks and the signing of the contract. The proposal must clearly state in Annex 2\_Budget what expenditure items the award will fund. In the budget proposal, please also indicate if any funding will be allocated to the identified Chinese partners and for what purpose.

The award will not fund items of equipment which institutions would normally be expected to possess (for example, computing equipment such as laptops). Nor will it normally fund conference or seminar attendance to disseminate findings unless specifically invited to do so by the British Council (see ‘What are the benefits of the award to the successful institution?’ below).

Please refer to Annex 7 for Eligible and ineligible costs.

In the event of any underspend of the Grant, this may be used for further activities under the Project subject to the British Council’s prior approval.

How do I ask a question about the award?

In addition, questions about the call can be sent to [liang.junhong@britishcouncil.org.cn](mailto:liang.junhong@britishcouncil.org.cn) , Cc’ing [elt@britishcouncil.org.cn](mailto:elt@britishcouncil.org.cn) until 17 February 2023

What are the conditions of the award?

* The successful UK institutions will own the intellectual property rights of the research output, including a final report of an agreed length, and will licence these rights to the British Council to use and disseminate the research output / final report at its own discretion with no limitation on time or territory. This will be specified in the agreement with the successful applicant. Separate agreements between UK and China partners are the responsibility of the UK institution.
* The proposer, institution and researchers must explicitly acknowledge the support of the British Council in any written or spoken dissemination of the research process and all outputs arising from it.
* The British Council reserves the right to make information on the successful proposals and any reports and research output freely and publicly available.
* The British Council will inform applicants as to whether the proposal is successful or not. The British Council is not obliged to enter into further discussions or offer advice on proposals. The decision of the British Council regarding these grants is final.
* Successful institutions must satisfy the British Council that the expenditure has been incurred in accordance with the original proposal by providing a detailed expenditure report at the end of the project.
* Institutions must agree to the terms and conditions of the award, which will be outlined in detail in the contract for successful applicants. Please be advised that Annex 3\_Standard Terms of the Grant Agreement is not final.

What are the benefits of the award to the successful institutions?

* Financial support which enables the research to take place.
* Publication and dissemination of the research and associated outputs by the British Council as an example of quality outputs from the UK, with full acknowledgement of the project team and their affiliated institutions.
* The right to refer to the research and associated outputs as funded by the British Council.
* Support with access to appropriate partners, teachers, and learners overseas.
* Opportunity to present (a) webinar/s through our website or online communities (this can be included as part of the dissemination strategy).
* Promotion of the report through British Council internal and external networks.
* The opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships with China partners.

What is the timeframe of the grant call?

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| **ACTIVITY** | **DATE** |
| Proposal submitted by | 23:59 UK time, Thursday 23 February 2023 |
| Questions for clarification submitted by & | Friday 17 February 2023 |
| **Deadline for UK institutions to note ‘intention to submit a proposal’** | Monday 20 February 2023, 00:59, UK time |
| Submission of final proposals | Thursday 23 February 2023 00:59, UK time |
| Evaluation process of applications | Friday 24 February – Friday 3 March 2023 |
| Decisions on awards communicated to successful applicants by | Monday 6 March 2023 |
| Final proposal submitted by  (Should any further adaptation be agreed) | Friday 10 March 2023 |
| Grant agreement finalized by | Friday 17 March 2023 |
| Grant agreement signed off by  (subject to due diligence checks of all partners, UK & China) | Monday 20 March 2023 |
| Grant payment (90%) processed by | Friday 31 March 2023 |

Reporting Requirements

A reporting schedule must be included in your proposal timeline. This should cover the following and include an indication of the proposed length of any written outputs:

* **Interim progress report (Internal):** **(30** **November 2023).** Highlighting successes, progress and challenges of the project. Clarifying next steps, budgetary expenditure, proposed future dissemination plan, and any specific progress on the outputs.
* **Draft Report:** - to be submitted to the British Council by  **29 February 2024.** This should include an accompanying draft of the output of practical reference and utility.
* **Final Report & final output of practical reference and utility: –** **(End of March 2024)** to be submitted to the British Council at the end of your project. This would normally include rationale, literature review, methodology, findings, discussion and implications, and references.
* **Detailed Financial Report:** - **(End of March 2024)** to be submitted to the British Council at the end of your project. Please note that in the event of underspend any re-allocation of funds under the Project must be formalised before the expiration of the Grant Agreement in accordance with the Change Control Clause - see Annex 3\_Standard Terms.

In addition, the British Council request that a **quarterly meeting schedule** (I.e., June, September, 2023; January 2024, April 2024 (dependent on proposed project length)) be agreed and implemented to allow for regular, in-person updates on progress throughout the year, and through which any additional guidance and support can be provided, where needed.

Ethics and Child Protection

It is essential that all legal and professional codes of practice are followed in conducting work supported by this programme. Applicants must ensure the proposed activity will be carried out to the highest standards of ethics and research integrity. In the online application form, applicants must clearly articulate how any potential ethical and health and safety issues have been considered and how they will be addressed, ensuring that all necessary ethical approval is in place before the project commences and all risks are minimised.

We have a duty of care to safeguard the children and vulnerable adults we work with. Please refer to the Safeguarding policy here: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/about-us/how-we-work/policies/safeguarding>

Where proposals involve any contact with children, each organisation and individual will need to adhere to the relevant national requirements to ensure they have been fully vetted to work with under-18s. Please also refer to the Research Councils UK ‘Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct’ (<http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/Publications/researchers/grc/>), the Inter Academy Partnership report ‘Doing Global Science: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in the Global Research Enterprise’ (<http://www.interacademycouncil.net/24026/29429.aspx>) or contact us for further guidance.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Applicants are required to ensure equal opportunities in the teams implementing their proposed activity. For the British Council’s approach, see our Equality Policy at: <https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/equality_policy_1.doc>

**Applicant screening**

In order to comply with UK government legislation, the British Council may at any point during the application process carry out searches of relevant third-party screening databases to ensure that neither the applicant institutions nor any of the applicants’ employees, partners, directors, or shareholders are listed:

* as an individual or entity with whom national or supranational bodies have decreed organisations should not have financial dealings.
* as being wanted by Interpol or any national law enforcement body in connection with crime.
* as being subject to regulatory action by a national or international enforcement body.
* as being subject to export, trade, or procurement controls or (in the case of an individual) as being disqualified from being a company director; and/or
* as being a heightened risk individual or organisation, or (in the case of an individual) a politically exposed person.

If the applicant or any other party is listed in a Screening Database for any of the reasons set out above, the British Council will assess the applicant as ineligible to apply for this grant call. The applicant must provide the British Council with all information reasonably requested by the British Council to complete the screening searches.

1. Note: This may include bilingual contexts where students and teachers are homogeneous. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Disciplines are to be selected by the awardee and categories may be general [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. There may be some scope to extend the deadline by a few days based on majority feedback by 20 February. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)