

Request Reference: 3316

FOI Request dated 10/01/2025 -

This is a Freedom of Information request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. I am requesting information regarding all collaborations with entities from the People's Republic of China (henceforth, China; excluding Hong Kong and Macau) that the University had between 1 January 2010 and 31 December 2023.

Please answer the questions listed below, with each Chinese partner as a separate entry. Include, but do not limit to, universities, research institutes, corporations, or government bodies with which you have cooperated:

Collaboration(s) with ____ [Name of the partner]:

- 1. Cooperation type (please choose one or multiple options; if you have had multiple collaborations with one entity during the period, please document all collaborations):*
 - a. Formal cooperation agreement*
 - a. Formal cooperation memorandum*
 - a. Confucius institute*
 - a. Student exchanges*
 - a. Academic and faculty exchanges*
 - a. Summer schools*
 - a. Joint research project*
 - a. Joint and double degree programme*
 - a. Other, please specify:*
- 2. All contractual documents on which the cooperation is based (agreements, memoranda, declarations etc.)*
- 3. Academic areas of cooperation (i.e. fields of study)*
- 4. Amount of financial income provided by this entity in the period.*
- 5. List of non-financial income provided by this entity in the period.*

Additionally, can you provide information on:

- 1. Does any Chinese partner participate in deciding the research focus of your university or has any capacity to influence decision-making regarding curricula, research grants, student grants, or internships?*
- 2. Which persons (positions) or bodies of your university are responsible for initiating cooperation with Chinese institutions?*
- 3. Is there any procedure in place to evaluate the potential risks of cooperation with the said entities from China? If yes, are there specific criteria used in the evaluation process?*
- 4. Is there any kind of training for the outgoing faculties, administrators, and students from your university who are visiting China regarding the challenges they may face there, given the policies of the Chinese government and the Chinese Communist Party authorities?*

Response

1. Collaboration(s) with partners – Please find attached.
2. All contractual documents on which the cooperation is based (agreements, memoranda, declarations etc.) – *Exempt as per Section 43(2) - Prejudice to commercial Interests
3. Academic areas of cooperation (i.e., fields of study) – Please find attached.
4. Amount of financial income provided by this entity in the period – *Exempt as per Section 43(2) - Prejudice to commercial Interests

5. List of non-financial income provided by this entity in the period – *Exempt as per Section 43(2) - Prejudice to commercial Interests

The CI hasn't contributed anything that requires a contract and has not facilitated any links with third parties. In 2023, the CI donated two table tennis tables to the Sports Centre, and in 2024 it donated £10K to the Music Department for equipment.

*Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at Section 1(1)(a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held. The second duty at Section 1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held. Where exemptions are relied upon Section 17 of FOIA requires that we provide the applicant with a notice which: a) states that fact b) specifies the exemption(s) in question and c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies.

This part of your request we have exempt from disclosure by virtue of the following exemption:

Section 43(2) – Commercial Interests

Section 43 is a class-based qualified exemption and is therefore subject to a Public Interest test.

Public interest considerations Factors favouring disclosure

Disclosing information regarding value of our partnership agreements would ensure the University are being open and transparent with the public. The disclosure would encourage public debate and increase public awareness on this subject matter. It would also allow the public to see where the public funds for the University are being spent.

Factors against disclosure

Disclosing the information requested is likely to damage the relationship between the University and our partnerships. In turn, this could prejudice the commercial interests of the service provider(s), especially in cases where there may be a limited number of agreements. Making a disclosure could identify information which has been specifically obtained through negotiation between the University and their partners, thus prejudicing the University position in future negotiations.

Balance test

Despite there being an identifiable public interest in the University being open and transparent, the interests of the University may be jeopardised if information relating to sensitive commercial information our partnership agreements are disclosed. The community would also be impacted as costs to the University could be driven up by the lack of competition due to partners refusing to do business with University's that disclose commercially sensitive information. If this information were to be disclosed, this could cause harm between the University of Hull and its partners. Having weighed up all the factors outlined above, on balance the argument for disclosing this information is not made out and therefore it is in the public interest to withhold this information from disclosure.

Section 17 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 requires the University, when refusing to provide information (because the information is exempt) to provide you the applicant with a notice which: (a) states that fact, (b) specifies the exemption in question and (c) states (if that would not otherwise be apparent) why the exemption applies. In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000 this email acts as a Refusal Notice for those aspects of your request

1. Does any Chinese partner participate in deciding the research focus of your university or has any capacity to influence decision-making regarding curricula, research grants, student grants, or internships? - No

2. Which persons (positions) or bodies of your university are responsible for initiating cooperation with Chinese institutions? - Global Student Recruitment Office/Global Strategy Office. Academic discussions may start at Faculty level but be referred to the above to undertake required due diligence.
3. Is there any procedure in place to evaluate the potential risks of cooperation with the said entities from China? If yes, are there specific criteria used in the evaluation process? -

Partnerships are assessed by the Global Strategy Office or Student Recruitment Office using the following criteria:

Reputation: Sanctions list/PEP/Corruption Perceptions Index; Adverse media – institution and leadership; Conflict of interest and web profile

Legal: Leadership – regulatory action/legal proceedings and Legal regulations in country

Financial: If private – shareholders/directors individual benefit & relationship; sources of funding; financial reports; specific taxation requirements for consideration

Academic: partner capability; is the institution registered with MoE and any other relevant bodies

Political and Environmental: Factors of concern around environmental sustainability, or other political downsides, particularly in relation to UoH stated values are noted.

The University also undertakes an assessment of research activity through its Trusted Research policy.

4. Is there any kind of training for the outgoing faculties, administrators, and students from your university who are visiting China regarding the challenges they may face there, given the policies of the Chinese government and the Chinese Communist Party authorities? - Staff and students are briefed in advance of travel as part of travel risk assessment