

Student Camps to China: Frequently Asked Questions

Section 1: The overall objectives and the programme for the visit

Who organises the China Student camps?

The China Summer Camps are organised and managed by the Confucius Institute for Schools at the Institute of Education, University College London, (known as UCL IOE CI for Schools) in partnership with Hanban (Office of Chinese Language Council International). Hanban generously funds and coordinates the China part of the study visit, including language and culture lessons, accommodation, subsistence, travel in China, and tourist activities and excursions.

What is the purpose of the visit?

All participating students will have 20 hours of language lessons during the visit, as well as Chinese culture and art crafts workshops, and time to spend at the homes of Chinese students. It is expected that students can learn and practise their Chinese language skills through classes, shopping in the Chinese supermarkets, and working on projects with their counterparts in their host schools.

On return to schools in England, students and teachers can share their experiences with their colleagues and beyond by making presentations at the school assembly, writing articles in school newsletters and through other media. Please send the **IOE CI team any articles / newsletters related to the visit, and we will present them to Hanban to demonstrate the impact of the study visit.**

We hope that a high proportion of participating students will continue to study Chinese at a higher level and engage with China authentically in their future study and careers.

Are we expected to bring gifts/presents for the host families/students?

During the 2 weeks' stay in China, you will meet Hanban representatives, host schools coordinators, Chinese classroom teachers, Chinese students and their families. It is likely that you and your students may form a special bond or friendship with some particular people and in previous years some hosts in China have shown great personal generosity to camps participants. It would be a good idea to prepare a few small presents to express your gratitude when appropriate. **Bookmarks or postcards of any local UK tourist attractions, fridge magnets, and souvenirs of icons such as red phone boxes, London buses or Big Ben** are usually well recognised and well received by Chinese hosts.

What is the pre-departure teachers' briefing day for? Who should attend?

The teachers' briefing day takes place in London a few weeks before the schools depart for their international educational visit. This is a key date for all teachers who will accompany this year's visit to China. **We expect that each school should send at least one of the teachers who will accompany the trip to attend this briefing event – we recommend that if a teacher has not been on the trip before they should attend.**

Teachers will be well informed in order to set realistic expectations for the China visit, have an opportunity to network with other teachers going on the trip and to prepare for any common problems that may arise before or during the trip.

What will we do while we are in China?

The programme itself will vary slightly from year to year but broadly participants can expect the following:

During the time in Beijing, participants will visit the major places of interest with a guide during the day. During the evenings, there will be a programme of cultural activities which the students can take part in.

The programme of events in each province will vary from province to province depending on local facilities and customs. However, common to each of the provinces will be some Mandarin language learning along with experience of Chinese cultural activities and contact with Chinese students. Participants will also be given the opportunity to visit a host family for a day but all participants will return to their host school to sleep at night.

Please note: the order of the itinerary will change from one year to the next and the itinerary for the province visit may happen earlier or later in the overall programme.

A detailed sample of a previous years' Beijing and province-specific programme can be viewed below:

(Please note that this is a sample itinerary and not all cultural visits may be included on your trip)

Sample itinerary for Beijing visit:

Date	Time	Activities
July	08:30	Hanban representatives pick up schools at the airport and travel to the accommodation.
	12:30-13:30	Lunch at the hotel or on campus
	14:00-18:00	A tour of Beijing zoo
	19:00-20:00	Dinner at the hotel or on campus
July	8:30-12:00	Visit Great Wall and Bird's Nest (Beijing 2008 Olympics stadium)
	12:30-13:30	Lunch at a restaurant
	15:00-17:00	Visit Museum of Science
	17:30-18:30	Dinner at a restaurant
	19:30	Watch Kongfu performance
July	9:30-10:30	Visits Lama Temple, Confucius Temple, and Hutong;
	11:00-12:00	Visits Hanban.
	12:30-14:00	Lunch at a restaurant
	14:30-17:00	A tour of Forbidden City
	18:00-19:30	Dinner of Peking duck at Wangfujing Quanjude restaurant
	20:00	Tour of Tiananmen Square on the Avenue of Everlasting Peace at night (partly on the bus and partly on foot)
July		Hanban representatives send the group to the airport for kick starting their province programme

Sample itinerary for one of the province host schools:
(Shanghai Jincai Middle School)

Date	Time	Arrangements
July	暂未定 TBC	接机，安排住宿、兑换人民币、情况介绍、参观校园开营须知 Check-in and Briefing
July	8:30-9:30	汉语课 Mandarin class
	9:30-9:35	课间休息 Break
	9:35-10:35	汉语课 Mandarin class
	10:35-10:45	课间休息；眼保健操 Break- eye exercises
	10:45-11:45	汉语课 Mandarin class
	11:45-13:00	午餐和午休 Lunch and Siesta
	13:00-14:00	汉语课 Mandarin class
	14:00-14:20	课间休息 Break
	14:20-15:20	中国文化课 Course on Chinese Culture
	15:30-17:30	结识中国朋友并活动 Activities with Chinese students
	18:00-18:45	晚餐 Supper
	19:00-21:00	浦江游览 Cruise on Pujiang River
July	8:00-8:30	早操（武术） Morning Exercise (doing Wushu or Martial arts)
	8:30-9:30	汉语课 Mandarin class
	9:30-9:35	课间休息 Break
	9:35-10:35	汉语课 Mandarin class
	10:35-10:45	课间休息；眼保健操 Break- Eye exercises
	10:45-11:45	汉语课 Mandarin class
	11:45-13:00	午餐和午休 Lunch and Siesta
	13:00-14:00	中国文化课 Course on Chinese Culture
	14:30-17:30	参观东方明珠塔 Visit Oriental Pearl Tower
	18:00-18:45	晚餐 Supper
	19:00-21:00	上海马戏城：时空之旅 Watch circus-performance
July	08:30-21:00	参观世博会 Visit Shanghai-Expo
July	8:00-8:30	早操（武术） Morning Exercise on Wu shu
	8:30-9:30	汉语课 Mandarin class
	9:30-9:35	课间休息 Break
	9:35-10:35	汉语课 Mandarin class
	10:35-10:45	课间休息；眼保健操 Break- Eye exercises

	10:45-11:45	汉语课 Mandarin class
	11:45-13:00	午餐和午休 Lunch and Rest
	13:00-14:00	汉语课 Mandarin class
	14:00-14:20	课间休息 Break
	14:20-15:20	中国文化课 Course on Chinese Culture
	15:20-17:30	体育活动 Physical Exercise (sports)
	18:00-18:45	晚餐 Supper
	19:00-21:00	游览新天地 Visit New World downtown shopping area
July	8:00-8:30	早操（武术） Morning Exercise on Wushu
	8:30-9:30	汉语课 Mandarin class
	9:30-9:35	课间休息 Break
	9:35-10:35	汉语课 Mandarin class
	10:35-10:45	课间休息；眼保健操 Break- doing eye exercises
	10:45-11:45	汉语课 Mandarin class
	11:45-13:00	午餐和午休 Lunch and siesta
	13:00-14:00	中国文化课 Course on Chinese Culture
	14:00-20:00	游览豫园 Visit Yuyuan garden
uly	8:00-8:30	早操（武术） Morning Exercise on Wu shu
	8:30-9:30	汉语课 Mandarin class
	9:30-9:35	课间休息 Break
	9:35-10:35	汉语课 Mandarin class
	10:35-10:45	课间休息；眼保健操 Break - Eye exercises
	10:45-11:45	汉语课 Mandarin class
	11:45-13:00	午餐和午休 Lunch and Rest
	13:00-14:00	汉语课 Mandarin class
	14:00-18:00	游览七宝古镇 Visit Ancient County of Seven Treasures
	18:00-18:45	晚餐 Supper
	19:00-21:30	自由活动 Free Activities
July	8:00-8:30	早操（武术） Morning Exercise on Wu shu
	8:30-9:30	汉语课 Mandarin class
	9:30-9:35	课间休息 Break
	9:35-10:35	汉语课 Mandarin class
	10:45-20:00	中国家庭体验 Home-Visit
July	9:00-10:30	闭幕式 Closing Ceremony

	11:45-13:00	午餐和午休 Lunch and Rest
	Afternoon - evening	自由时间、打包行李 Packing
July	8:00-20:00	机场送别，回京 Depart for Beijing

Are host families CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) checked?

There is no equivalent of the CRB check in China so families are not vetted in this way. However, **all host families are recommended by the host schools and approved by the local educational authorities in China.** The IOE CI also ensures that students are placed in pairs in their host families. Students will visit Chinese students' homes during the day and return to the dormitories on the school campus for the night. Accompanying teachers can request a list of contacts for the Chinese host families upon arrival at the host schools.

Will we have any spare time?

The programme is likely to be extensive and lots will be arranged for you so purely free time may be limited. This will mostly be in the evening. Accompanying teachers are expected to make their own arrangements with their pupils during any free time and they are responsible for their students' welfare during this time. All participants are asked to respect the advice/requests of the local hosts during their stay.

None of the accompanying teachers speak any Mandarin, does this matter?

No. Ideally one of the teachers will speak Mandarin but we understand that this may not be possible. Whilst in China there will be plenty of English-speaking staff/volunteers on hand to help you if you need it.

You might find it useful to have a copy of the **BBC Active Mandarin Chinese Phrase Book** with you. It has useful phrases for a wide variety of situations and is very clearly laid out and helpful (ISBN 978-1-4066-1210-3, RRP £4.99).

How much pocket money do students need?

All essential costs in China are covered by Hanban. This includes food, drinks and internal transport. Students will only need a small amount of money for souvenirs and snacks, and are discouraged from bringing a lot of money with them.

A shopping mall visit in Beijing will be arranged. All prices for the items and goods can be negotiated substantially downward from their asking prices. A handful of students from previous Camps visits have been known to spend their pocket money in the excitement of the shopping experience and quickly regretted doing so. Teachers and students are warned to plan their budget carefully to avoid unnecessary spending.

Section 2: Accommodation

Where are we going to stay in Beijing and in provinces/cities?

Camps participants will be accommodated in hotels and/or host schools/universities. Students are likely to share dormitory style student accommodation with other students from their school. Each room can typically sleep two/four students. If certain host schools have more rooms available, it may be possible for students to share rooms in pairs, although it ought to be emphasised that this will depend on availability. Male and female students are typically accommodated on separate floors wherever possible, and Chinese institutions are very strict that male and female students must not share mixed dormitory rooms.

Accompanying teachers are going to be housed in the same building but typically on a separate floor designated as a teachers' floor. The teachers' floor is for both male and female teachers. At times, it may be necessary to use your initiative to separate male and female sides for toilets and showers, e.g. by sticking on temporary signs, should the hosts have overlooked this. Alternatively, you can ask for help at

the school, and your Chinese hosts will be more than happy to support you within their means. It is also likely that the teachers' rooms may have better facilities, such as en suite and TV. This varies from one host school to another and depends on availability.

What are the toilets & showers like?

Showers and toilets will be single sex.

Public toilets in China are likely to be in a traditional squat style but in accommodation seated toilets are normally standard.

In some provinces showers cubicles may only be separate by shower curtains.

Alcohol

Accompanying teachers should be aware that alcohol is strictly forbidden in student accommodation, even for staff. In previous years, accompanying teachers have been able to enjoy a drink at local restaurants or bars when off duty.

How do students contact home while they are in China?

Mobile phones with global roaming enabled do normally work in all provinces in China and phone owners will be able to call and text at will. It is the phone owner's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of the charges that they will incur for using their phone while in China. We recommend that students and teachers all turn off their internet roaming while in China as phone bills can be very costly.

We recommend that schools instigate a 'phone tree' system to let parents and guardians know that the Camps participants have arrived safely and to advise them of possible delays on the return journey.

Participants are unlikely to have individual access to landline telephones while in China; however E-mail should be readily available in the host schools in which case students can send e-mails themselves in their free time.

What should I do if one of my students falls ill on the campus?

All host schools have medical clinics on the campus. School nurses will be on duty 24 hours a day. If you or your student falls ill, the first point of contact will be your allocated host school coordinator, who is usually fluent in both Chinese and English. She/he can take you to visit the school nurse and help you translate the symptoms of the illness and any background information such as pre-existing conditions and regular medication. If it is possible to treat the illness at the school, the nurse will provide a prescription. If the case is complicated, a referral to the best local hospital may be required.

Section 3: Risk assessments

What sort of risk assessments are carried out for the visit? When will we receive the completed forms?

The IOE CI team conduct the risk assessments in all host institutions and carry out an extensive risk assessment in May/June. Examples of risk assessments from previous visits are available on request. The assessments themselves are carried out near to the departure date to ensure that the assessment and measures are as up to date as possible.

My Local Education Authority has additional questions for the visit which are not covered by your risk assessments, what should I do?

The IOE CI team works with Hanban and in China to conduct an extensively detailed risk assessment for each host school. If your LEA has additional requirements that we need to answer on a case by case basis,

please ensure that you send in your requests for our attention as early as possible and no later than the end of June.

Section 4: Medical insurance and inoculations

Do we need to have medical insurance?

Schools are responsible for ensuring that all participating students and teachers have valid medical insurance for the visit before departure, as set out in the Terms and Conditions. **A valid medical insurance number will be required for each participant at the visa application stage.**

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) offers detailed advice about travelling to China, including useful sections on medical insurance.

FCO Travel advice for China:

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/asia-oceania/china>

FCO Health advice for travel in China:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/china/health>

Schools are responsible for arranging travel and health insurance for their group.

Do we need to have inoculations?

Participants are responsible for arranging all appropriate inoculations, as set out in the Terms and Conditions. We urge all participants to consult NHS Fit for Travel website for immunisation advice no later than six weeks before the departure date (i.e. at the beginning of June):

<http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/destinations/asia-east/china>

If in doubt, a doctor or other qualified medical professional will be best placed to advise on a course of inoculations if required, and check that any necessary vaccinations and other preventative measures are up to date in the case of each participant. The NHS website has a search facility to locate health services in your area.

You may also wish to refer to the health advice for China on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) website:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/china/health>.

What if one of the participants falls ill during e trip?

During the visit to China, the accompanying teachers are expected to take the lead with their own school group, including their students' safety and well-being, as set out in the Terms and Conditions.

Teachers are expected to prepare in advance and carry with them a (confidential) list of all known medical conditions for participants in his/her group, including any known allergy information and a clear schedule of any current medication with dosages and times.

It is the responsibility of the teacher to log any illnesses or accidents and report them to the host school's coordinators regularly (the coordinators speak good English). Host institutions all have a clinic and trained medical staff on site for small injuries. If a hospital visit is necessary, a Mandarin/English speaker will be available to accompany the participants to the hospital. The coordinators will be able to advise the teacher on the best options to treat the illness, either on site at the school's clinic or at a local hospital.

What if one of the participants has a pre-existing medical condition?

If any of the participants has a pre-existing medical condition which requires special arrangements, the school must inform the IOE CI before the trip.

Depending on the condition, the school may be asked to liaise directly with airlines/travel agents for special requirements. If any of the participants take medication, they may need to obtain a doctor's note. Please check with the travel agent and/or the IOE CI if this is applicable to your group.

One of my participants has a food allergy/other allergies, will this cause a problem in China?

Nuts and shellfish are often used in Chinese cooking and food is sometimes cooked in peanut oil.

Depending on the severity of the allergy, this fact may or may not affect your student. Food allergies are not understood in China in the same way as they are here in the UK because they are not as widespread.

Allergies to other things may be more or less well understood in China depending on the case.

To reduce the risk for participants with allergies, the IOE CI:

- Includes details of the possibility of food or other allergies in the general risk assessment;
- Outlines any special requirements to our Chinese partners, Hanban;
- Sends the participating schools a list of useful phrases in Chinese which we recommend they make into cards for all the students to carry with them at all times. These phrases include; 'I am allergic to nuts. I must not eat any nuts', 'I cannot eat shellfish', 'I am allergic to penicillin' etc.;
- Strongly advises that participants with food allergies do not eat from street stalls whose owners may have cooked with peanut oil or other allergens;
- Asks schools to ensure that parents/guardians have made the accompanying teachers fully aware of the details of the allergy and any special requirements that may arise from it (failure to do so will shift responsibility to them if there is a problem);
- Requires accompanying teachers to be trained to use an EpiPen if the student carries one with them.

Ultimately, accompanying teachers are responsible for their students' welfare whilst in China, and in agreeing to take part in the trip, teachers accept this responsibility.

We may need a signed letter, on your school headed paper, detailing whether the student will need to carry an EpiPen with them, the likely symptoms if they do come into contact with nuts, and confirming that the teacher accompanying can take care of them and use the EpiPen if necessary. If a letter is required it should also include details of step by step actions should an emergency occur.

The same applies for any condition that may require treatment with an injection.

My student has a dietary requirement; is this going to cause a problem in China?

Dietary requirements such as vegetarianism/veganism or religious observances such as halal meat/kosher food are not generally understood in China in the same way as they are here in the UK.

The IOE CI will provide cards with Chinese explanations of dietary requirements and participants are asked to be flexible in their approach and be prepared to explain carefully that they do not eat meat.

Participants who eat only halal meat or kosher food, may find it difficult to find halal or kosher meat during the trip. Participants should be prepared to eat vegetarian food if non-halal meat or non-kosher food is not available for them.

Please note: If anyone in your group has an allergy/special requirement you must let us know as soon as possible. We will also inform the airlines in advance of your flights. Special requirements normally catered for by airlines are as follows: vegetarian, vegetarian non-dairy, vegan, kosher, halal, diabetic gluten free, non-lactose. Some airlines require a medical form to be completed in the case of a severe nut allergy.

My student has a physical special need; can he/she take part?

Students with restricted mobility may find accessibility to buildings, public areas and tourist sites difficult, especially outside Beijing and Shanghai, and may not therefore be able to be as independent as they can be here in the UK. Our partners in China will help make sure that students with restricted mobility issues are considered in all activities planned on the trip.

If you have a student with a physical disability and are concerned about any element of the trip in regards to your student, please contact n.larkin@ucl.ac.uk to discuss.

Section 5: International flights and domestic China flights

Does it matter if the passenger names in the e-tickets are inaccurate or spelt incorrectly?

Yes! At check-in, the airlines will insist that each passenger's passport matches the flight booking information and tickets to the letter. If the e-ticket details do **not** match participants' passports exactly at check-in, it is likely the participant concerned will **not** be allowed to board the plane and exceptions will not be made on the day.

Any inaccuracies in the e-tickets must be corrected well in advance and may incur an additional fee from the airlines.

Please double-check all e-tickets very carefully well in advance. If there are any discrepancies, please get in touch with the CI team as soon as possible at chinesenetworks@ucl.ac.uk.

What are the travel arrangements within China (i.e. for travelling between Beijing and host schools in various cities)?

Hanban will arrange and pay for the flights or high speed trains between Beijing and various cities where host schools are based. Hanban representatives will be present to handle the e-tickets for travel within China and will help group leaders manage their check-in process at Beijing and other Chinese airports or train stations.

Travel while in situ in provinces will largely be undertaken by coach.

What is the luggage allowance for flights?

We recommend that check in luggage does not exceed 20kg in weight.

Although international allowances may be higher, please be aware that the luggage weight allowance for internal flights in China is often **slightly less** than for the international flights. Passengers should be mindful of the lower check-in luggage allowance of 20kg when packing.

What is the domestic China flight luggage allowance?

For internal flights between Beijing and the host provinces, **one item of check-in luggage up to 20kg** is allowed per person, and one item of hand luggage up to 8kg per person.

Please note that this is **slightly less** than the weight allowance for the international flights. Passengers should be mindful of the lower check-in luggage allowance of 20kg when packing.

How much time should we allow for check-in at the departure airport in the UK?

We recommend that the groups arrive at the airport **check-in** in good time, and preferably more than 3 hours before departure. School groups are advised to allow as much time as possible.

Can you request vegetarian meals for us on the international and domestic flights?

Provided that schools have passed the dietary requirements to the CI team well in advance, we will share this information with our travel agent in the UK and Hanban in China.

Section 6: Visas

How can I arrange the visas?

Schools are asked to arrange the visa application themselves.

Diversity Travel and Hanban UK can arrange visa's for a fee.

Diversity Travel visa service details are available here:

109 Tottenham Court Road
London
W1T 5AD
Tel: 020 3544 3550
Email: visas@diversitytravel.co.uk

Hanban UK visa service details are available here:

What kind of visa - group or individual?

We recommend schools apply for individual visas instead of group visas. Should one student have to return home unexpectedly but the remainder of the group wish to stay on, having a group visa can be problematic.

Should all visa applicants, including students, attend the visa centre for the collection of fingerprints?

Yes. All applicants aged 14 and over will need to attend the Chinese visa centre in person to apply for the Chinese visa. Further information can be found on the [Chinese Embassy website](#).

What category of visa should I apply for, tourist visa or business visa?

Please read the attached visa information supplied by Diversity Travel.

What is a visa invitation letter?

The IOE CI and our Chinese partner, Hanban, provide letters of support for the visa application, copies of which will be sent to the school to enable applications in May/June.

One of my students holds non-UK passport, what should I do?

If your school group has students whose passports are non UK passports, it is recommended that you seek advice about the visa application procedure as soon as possible because the applicable visa rules might be more complex to some countries' passport holders and it will take a lot longer to obtain a visa.

See the contact details for Diversity Travel above.

How long should my passport be valid for?

At the time of travel, all students and teachers must hold passports which are **valid for 6 months from the return date**. For example, if you return to the UK on 29th July then your passport must be valid until 29th January the following year.

Section 7: Emergency procedures

What happens if there is an emergency such as flooding, landslide, medical quarantine or social unrest?

Each year the CI team, in collaboration with Hanban, identifies the safest areas of China to become camp destinations. The CI team also work with Hanban and the selected host schools in China to conduct rigorous risk assessments, taking into account reasonably known risks and putting in place appropriate preventative measures and emergency procedures.

In the unlikely event of a major public emergency in China British Embassies and High Commissions abroad have their own websites and may have individual social media feeds or consular networks. Contact details for all British diplomatic posts overseas are available via the FCO website.

Should an emergency situation arise, the emergency procedures will come into effect. The procedures specify an effective system of communication and staff support at IOE CI and in China, which we ask all schools to be aware of and adhere to if necessary. Accompanying members of staff will be instructed on the full procedures at the teachers' briefing event prior to departure.

IOE CI will request contact details for teachers in China and an emergency contact for the school in advance of the visit.