

## **University of Liverpool and ECUST PhD Mobility Programme (International Travel Support Grant) 2025**

**Deadline for applications –28<sup>th</sup> April, Monday, 5pm GMT**

We are delighted to offer PhD students at the University of Liverpool opportunity to apply for a PhD Mobility Programme for summer school activity at East China University of Science and Technology (ECUST), Shanghai, China. The summer school programme provides students with the chance to develop new technical and soft skills, gain vital international experience to boost their employability, as well as gain a better understanding of other cultures.

The summer school programme provides an opportunity for a small cohort of selected candidates to gain collaborative research experience in an international research environment or equivalent venue and fostering long-term collaboration.

The programme is in person by spending three weeks at ECUST with the opportunity to do in-person work with team members from different countries, including the local students.

Please note priority will be given to applicants who have not participated in this scheme previously.

### **The UoL – ECUST Partnership**

For almost a decade, the Universities of Liverpool and ECUST have had a successful partnership collaborating mainly in Chemistry and Materials Sciences on both education and research. The summer school programme for UoL PhD is one of a number of mechanisms that support this and encourage the development of relationships between both staff and research students. The summer school has been extended to HSS from 2025.

### **Who can apply?**

The Fellowships are open to all PhD students with Non-Chinese nationality in relative subject areas. We are particularly encouraging applications in fields in the following areas:

- Aging and Health, including but not limited to social science and public health at UoL.
- Digital Humanities
- Advanced Materials and Chemistry
- Mechanical Engineering
- Biomedical Engineering
- Molecular and Cell Biology

Other fields will be considered if a strong case can be made for how this supports longer - term partnership.

### **What is included in the mobility programme?**

#### **Finance**

The mobility grant will provide a contribution up to £500 to the cost of international travel to Shanghai, ECUST/CSC will provide accommodation, arrangements for airport transfers in China (for large groups arriving on the same flight, the suggested arrival date is 5th July 2025 at Shanghai Pudong International Airport (PVG)), and some of the subsistence cost whilst at

ECUST(for a period of 3 weeks). Please note the grant is not expected to cover all costs, but does provide a substantial contribution to the main expenses.

Candidates may wish to seek additional funding from their School or Department, if they identify a potential funding gap. Candidates should investigate and check costs in advance of application. For example, other costs to consider include timing of flights affecting costs, the cost for traveling in China before or after the event. No further funding can be provided.

### **Benefits of the mobility programme**

Successful candidates will have the opportunity to collaborate with a research group and/or designated academics at ECUST during the 3-week period with the expectation they will be a part of a team and will build their professional connections.

### **The mobility programme will offer:**

- one to one research mentoring, including support in agreed subject methods
- access to relevant research resources and training at ECUST
- opportunities for research collaboration through participation in relevant research group activities (seminars, presentations etc.) to develop networks.

Demonstration of the benefits to the wider department at UoL and/or the institutional strategic priorities through the placement would be advantageous. There should be a clear explanation of how your department at UoL will make use of the mobility to build or maintain links between academic staff at ECUST as well as students.

- Successful applicants will be provided with a grant of up to £500 to contribute to international flight costs, visas (if needed) and living costs. No further funds will be provided.
- Applicants will be responsible for booking and arranging their own flights to Shanghai Pudong (PVG) airport. Arrangements for airport transfers in China (for large groups arriving on the same flight, the suggested arrival date is 5th July 2025 at Shanghai Pudong International Airport (PVG).
- ECUST will be responsible for arranging the accommodation for applicants.
- ECUST/CSC will provide 1000 CNY for stipend (Direct into the temporary student card, could cover most of food costs in the canteens on campus)
- Applicants who require a visa to enter the China as they are not covered by the China visa waiver scheme, will need to arrange this and consider the length of time required to apply for and receive visas from China immigration services and the cost of travel to a Chinese consulate (Manchester) for visa applications.

The dates of travel are expected to be early July to end of July 2025 to fit with the expected summer school time 2025. You should consider if this will impact on your plans and expectations.

### **How to apply**

Firstly, think about the design of your own project and what you want to achieve from the summer school experience. ECUST will help to identify a mentor at ECUST to support your

application and host you physically for the duration of summer school. Speak to your supervisor, research group or departmental head for suggestions of faculty at ECUST who will be approachable and how this connection fits with the department's objectives. There may be pre-existing collaborations in your department which can be built on.

As part of the application you will need to provide the following:

1. A supporting statement to include:
  - The working title of your PhD, departmental affiliation, year of study and a short 200-word overview that could be publicized to an informed but general audience.
  - Resource Requirements -If your project will require additional resource while at ECUST, e.g. special lab materials,
  - Outputs (200 words) - an indication of the type of outputs that you envisage, for example datasets / databases, policy briefs, exhibitions.
  - Specific training needs and/or specialist resources you would require access to while at ECUST.
  - An indication that the application has considered the grant available and if there are funding gaps and how these will be addressed. (150 words)

The supporting statement should show how the Fellowship and the outputs emerging from it will:

- enhance your career prospects through exposure to a new research environment and through the development of new networks
  - add value at an individual and institutional level (how it adds value to research undertaken by UoL and ECUST)
  - contribute to the sustainability of longer-term research plans at UoL beyond the period of the Fellowship
2. A letter of nomination from your PhD supervisor or Head of Department at your home institution.

The letter should explain:

- your standing in your particular field and recognition of your work with reference to your proposed project.
- how the area of research fits with the theme areas of the ECUST- UoL partnership (above) and the internationalisation objectives of the Faculty / Department
- how the fellowship will strengthen contact with a range of staff at UoL and ECUST.
- How the proposed work aligns with UoL's commitment to the UN sustainability goals and UoL's equality, diversity and inclusivity objectives.
- an indication of any potential longer-term funding applications for research grants or international placements.

For UoL applicants these may for example include lead agency agreements for UK-China bilateral funding as well as the following:

- ESRC Post-Doctoral Fellowships
- Leverhulme International Fellowships
- Royal Society International Exchanges.

If you need help identifying a mentor you should talk to your supervisor or Head of Department in the first instance and seek assistance, if necessary, from the UoL Partnerships and Global Engagement Office, Dr Xiaofeng Wu ([xfwu@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:xfwu@liverpool.ac.uk))

### **Criteria for assessment**

Assessment of applications will be on

- (i) the quality of the proposal as well as anticipated outcomes / benefits at an individual level
- (ii) added value the project will make in terms of ongoing collaboration between University of Liverpool and ECUST.
- (iii) an appreciation that the Fellowship will take place in a different cultural environment.
- (iv) an appreciation of the budget available.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to an interview to discuss their proposal and plans. These are likely to take place the week of 29<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.

### **Application Platform**

You should complete the application form on the platform [ECUST PhD mobility application form](#) and send the documents listed below to Dr Xiaofeng Wu – [xfwu@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:xfwu@liverpool.ac.uk) by 28th April 2025, 5pm.

Supporting documents required for the application:

- Research proposal with plan and supporting statement.
- Letter of support from your primary University of Liverpool Supervisor or Head of Department

Data Sharing – UK GDPR.

In order to facilitate the fellowship, it may be necessary to share application data from UoL students with colleagues at ECUST, in which case applicant's consent to share data outside the UK will be required (see application platform questionnaire). Personal data will be shared in line with current data sharing agreements in place for UoL students participating in placements at ECUST. This will be aligned with UK GDPR requirements for the transfer of data outside the UK and EU GDPR areas.

Self- Reflection

During the Fellowship you may be asked to join a group discussion or seminar before travelling to ECUST in order to develop a network with other Fellowship students. At the end of your Fellowship, you will be asked to take part in a short follow up call about your experience either individually or as part of a group and will be invited to produce a short blog on your experience for the UoL website.