

## University of Birmingham in Guangzhou



### UoB in Guangzhou: embedding an international platform

The University of Birmingham Guangzhou Centre is in a unique facility established in coordination with the Guangzhou municipality to facilitate joint research and education initiatives in Guangzhou and the wider region.

The University of Birmingham Guangzhou Centre provides a strong platform from which to build upon the work already underway and to build new initiatives with our partners in Guangzhou.

### Part 1 - Strong Connections

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During the course of 2010, at the very moment that it was sharpening its international strategy, the University of Birmingham senior team became aware of two unrelated initiatives focused on Guangzhou in Southern China. The first was a cohort study of the health of the over 50s being treated by one hospital in the city which was being undertaken by a UoB public health professor, with the close involvement of the Health Bureau of Guangzhou Municipal Government. The second was a series of summer schools for senior GMG officials run by academics involved in public management in the University, building on the connections made through the city twinning of Birmingham and Guangzhou a few years earlier.

The strength of these connections became apparent when a delegation led by the Vice Chancellor visited Guangzhou in October 2010; the university representatives were warmly welcomed by the Vice-Mayor of the City and almost of these 100 civil servants attended an alumni dinner, many of them talking of the importance of the cohort study. The impact was such that they decided before leaving the city that Guangzhou would be the focus of the University's ambitions to create an institutional platform in China. Beyond the location, the delegation was clear about only two things: firstly, this platform would be research-led, reflecting the mission of the University; and, secondly, it would not involve the opening of a UoB campus engaged in volume undergraduate teaching.

A shared approach was agreed with GMG based on three criteria where the projected research platform should:

- Benefit the economic and social infrastructure of the City;
- Develop the capacity and capability of universities in the City;
- Build upon the academic expertise of UoB.

### Part 2 - Our strategic approach

What has emerged subsequently in Guangzhou is a strategy where UoB is embedding itself in a series of mutually beneficial and long-term collaborations with a range of agencies across the City with the potential to undertake a broad spectrum of research, teaching and knowledge transfer activities. It has engaged a significant number of its leading researchers across medicine, environmental science, business and engineering and facilitated their access to local partners and intelligence through its Representative Office.

### Part 3 - A Timely Initiative

Furthermore, over the past eighteen months, UoB has established itself as a partner of choice for the local government of the third largest city in China, and one with bold ambitions for its economic and social development. It is developing close relations with four Universities in the City and a growing number of major commercial concerns. It is well on its way to creating the unique research-led platform that it envisaged at the outset.