

**University of Birmingham
China Institute
2022 Annual Report**

**Welcome**

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the University of Birmingham’s China Institute Annual Report covering the calendar year 2022.

The last year has been one of international turmoil and change and even though many countries have shown signs of emergence from the COVID pandemic, considerable challenges remain. Regular travel between the UK and China, in particular, has been very difficult and has restricted our ability to have face-to-face meetings with our Chinese partners.

Despite the travel-related challenges, our established China Institute Office in Guangzhou has enabled us to continue to engage with partners and stakeholders, augmented by the all too familiar opportunities provided by video platforms.

The Guangzhou team has seen a few changes over the last year, and we are delighted to welcome our new team members, Faye Fei and Petula Liao, as Project Managers, supporting development of our partnerships. This year we also welcomed Huijun Fan, Qiuyue Lin, and Junjun Liang to our staff base supporting the Jinan

University-University of Birmingham Joint Institute.

In-person teaching has gradually returned across the University’s campuses in Birmingham and Dubai, and in spite of continuing restrictions, we have begun to see our staff going to Guangzhou to deliver our Mathematics degrees to the students in the Joint Institute with Jinan University (J-BJI).

We are proud to have graduated another cohort of students, again with a very high number of first-class degrees, and this time to almost 200 students.

Partnership development, either through growth of existing links or the launching of new collaborations has continued, and you will find a selection of these and their successes throughout this report. A number of of MoUs (Memorandum of Understanding), agreements and contracts were signed via virtual ceremonies and this year saw us participating in a wide range of Chinese university anniversary celebrations.

As we have moved back to in-person teaching, so we have also gradually transitioned from fully virtual events to some that are hybrid, and we were delighted to be able to host the UK-China Joint Institute Alliance Annual General Meeting and conference, at which most of the participating 38 UK institutions and their Chinese counterparts were represented.

2022 represented a big step for the University in terms of the recognition of its research. The UK Government Research Excellence Framework concluded that 9 research areas at the University are in the UK Top 5, several of which are central to our engagements with Chinese partners, including Earth and Environmental Sciences, Computer Science, Sport and Exercise Science, and Public Health and Primary Care.

We look forward with anticipation to 2023, when we expect to see many of our partnerships thriving, new ones being developed, and importantly, to the opportunity to travel so that we can further enhance our collaborations and friendships through face-to-face meetings, for which there is no perfect substitute.

Professor Jon Frampton

Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor (China)

Director of University of Birmingham China Institute

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# **2022 Year in Review**

Information up to date as of the period 29th Nov – 13th December 2022

* 1,357 Twitter followers
* 33,905 Weibo followers (14% growth)
* 26,601 WeChat followers (20% growth)
* 3 major events
* 5,000+ event attendees (in-person and online)
* 6,000+ Chinese students studying at the University of Birmingham (including transnational education)
* 864 Publications with Chinese partners
* 6,458 Chinese media publications mentioning the University of Birmingham
* £1.96 billion Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE)

**Case Studies**

THE EARLIEST KNOWN JAWED VERTEBRATES DISCOVERED IN CHINA

**Dr Ivan Sansom, Associate Professor in Palaeobiology and Senior Lecturer in the School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences**

**Dr Plamen Andreev, Honorary Research Fellow, School of Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences, Qujing Normal University**

Working as part of an international team led by Professor Zhu Min at the Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, University of Birmingham (UoB) alumnus Dr Plamen Andreev and Dr Ivan Sansom have recently published two papers in the journal Nature describing the oldest direct evidence for jawed vertebrates.

Based upon large samples from a remote site in the Guizhou Province of south China, we were able to extract minute fossils representing the teeth and skeletal components of two types of early ‘shark’ that the team named as *Qianodus duplicis* and *Fanjingshania renovata*, respectively. The specimens were isolated from the rock using weak acetic acid and examined with a combination of light microscopy and synchrotron tomography, meaning we were able to study their internal structure and growth patterns confirming their vertebrate nature and assignment to early sharks.

The presence of primitive sharks in the 439-million-year-old shallow seas that covered south China during the Silurian Epoch goes someway to fill in a curious gap in the early fossil record of jawed fish.

We have been seeing hints in the shape of scales that suggested these fish evolved much earlier in geological

time than previously thought, but these new fossils provide definitive evidence for this hypothesis. These specimens also question existing models of vertebrate evolution by significantly condensing the timeframe for the emergence of jawed fish from their closest jawless ancestors. This knowledge will have profound impact on how we assess evolutionary rates in early vertebrates and the relationship between morphological and molecular change in these groups and will provide the agenda for ongoing collaboration between the UoB and the Chinese

Academy of Sciences.

Our two papers have been widely covered by more than 250 global media outlets and were part of a collection of four related publications featured on the front cover of *Nature.* They have been reported by more than 350 Chinese media outlets and generated 610 million views on Weibo within days, becoming one of the most widely read scientific studies on the Chinese web.

JOCKEY CLUB SPORTS

EMPOWERING PROGRAMME

**Professor Joan L Duda, Professor of Sport and Exercise Psychology**

Coach behaviours significantly impact how young people feel about and develop through their sport participation. To help coaches in Hong Kong better understand and apply principles supporting optimal engagement and psychosocial development in youth sport, Professor Joan Duda is collaborating with Dr Ka Man Leung and her team from the Education University of Hong Kong. The three-year ‘Jockey Club Sports Empowering Programme’ project, funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities, involves coaches and the children they coach from five sport associations specialized in hockey, rugby, tennis, basketball, and dragon boat.

The over-arching project aims to promote healthy and adaptive motivational climates in youth sport, and enhance character development via sport, through the systematic training of sport coaches. One component of the training package to be delivered to the coaches is the evidence-based *Empowering Coaching™* programme. Professor Duda, who is an internationally-known researcher in this area and the founder of *Empowering Coaching*™ (www.empoweringcoaching.co.uk), has been training 17 tutors to deliver the workshop to youth sport coaches in Hong Kong.

Via support from the University of Birmingham Hong Kong Foundation, a one-year project commencing in 2023 will provide added value to this ongoing work by delivering the training to teachers in Hong Kong schools. Objectives are to translate, tailor, and pilot test a bespoke version of *Empowering Coaching*™ for secondary Physical Education teachers in each of the three regions of Hong Kong (Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories). The project will produce an Empowering PE™ Hong Kong training programme that will be ready for subsequent roll out in the Hong Kong school systems.

PREDICTING CLIMATE EXTREMES IN CHINA

**Professor Gregor C. Leckebusch, Chair of Meteorology and Climatology, Met Office Joint Chair at the University of Birmingham**

**Dr Kelvin Ng, Post-Doctoral Research Fellow**

Climate extremes can have devastating socioeconomic impacts on East Asia and amongst the most dangerous threats are those posed by extensive flooding, e.g., of the Yangtze River, due to extreme precipitation. A crucial part of this rainfall is related to the so-called Mei-yu front, which emerges during the East Asian summer monsoon season over Southern China and the West Pacific, moving northward during the season. An accurate prediction of extreme Mei-yu precipitation thus plays an important role in decision-making and policy development for disaster risk reduction and mitigation, especially for future climate services combating anthropogenic climate change.

The principal and most sophisticated tool enabling climate predictions on longer scales are so called ‘climate models’. These dynamically simulate future weather and climate patterns, providing scenarios of future greenhouse gas emission developments. Despite many advances having been made in climate modelling, these often struggle to simulate the full magnitude of extreme precipitation. This is partly related to their coarse resolution or their inability to fully represent all necessary processes on scales relevant to extreme precipitation.

The project PRE-CAX, led by the University of Birmingham in collaboration with the University of Reading, funded by the Newton Fund/Met Office CSSP-China programme, aims to improve the representation of extreme Mei-yu precipitation in climate models by making use of the well-simulated, larger-scale components of the climate system. PRE-CAX combines recently developed machine learning and data driven techniques with classical statistical approaches. The methodology developed has improved the representation of extreme Mei-yu precipitation based on climate models and thus can improve the estimation of future changes of extreme Mei-yu precipitation. A similar approach is just developed for extreme precipitation from tropical cyclones.

ESTABLISHING A COLLABORATIVE CENTRE FOR HEALTH RESEARCH WITH SUN YAT-SEN UNIVERSITY FIRST AFFILIATED HOSPITAL

**Professor K K Cheng, Professor of Public Health and Primary Care, Director of the Institute of Applied Health Research**

**Lin Hu, China-UK Project Manager, Institute of Applied Health Research**

Sun Yat-sen University First Affiliated Hospital (SYSUFAH) is probably the largest hospital in South China, and it recently attained the status of a National Clinical Academic Centre. During the last decade, there has been extensive collaboration between the University of Birmingham (UoB) and SYSUFAH in research and training.

This year, led by Prof K K Cheng, Director of the Institute of Applied Health Research (IAHR), UoB and SYSUFAH have entered into a major new strategic collaboration.

This unique partnership adds an additional dimension to the work undertaken in our sister city of Guangzhou, which is identified as a key priority in UoB’s strategic approach to China. The ambitious project will build a multi-centre research platform in the South China region consisting of a number of clinical research projects.

The partnership will also develop a community-based cohort study, the outcomes of which will serve as a foundation for further epidemiological, clinical and laboratory research on important health issues ultimately leading to better informed decision making and improving health outcomes for the people of Guangzhou. In addition to giving UoB researchers access to a project of significant scale, the collaboration will also help strengthen the research capacity of SYSUFAH in the discipline of Geriatrics.

The establishment of a centre of excellence for clinical and population-based research will bring long-lasting benefits for improved healthcare delivery, public health and academic developments in South China and beyond.

BA ENGLISH AS A MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

**Dr John Goodyear, Lecturer (Teaching), English as a Modern Foreign Language**

**Qiuyu Deng, Huaichong Yao, Leyuan Zhang, BA English as a Modern Foreign Language**

In 2020, we launched the BA English as a Modern Foreign Language programme (EMFL), aimed at equipping non-native speakers of English with an in-depth knowledge of English and sophisticated language skills to communicate nationally, internationally, and globally. This year, we are delighted that three students from Chinese partners have joined this programme, and we asked them to reflect on their experience:

“Having been involved in the EMFL programme since this September, I have learned a lot from this programme and the people I met here. There are five hours of English core seminars every week, several options of translation projects and some other selective courses. It is such an experience to join the EMFL group, which is not just my main course, but also a kind of connection to the local culture and an opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds. Cultural encounters offer international students’ chances to be more inclusive, allowing me to have conversations with the world outside of mine.”

- Qiuyu Deng

“The University of Birmingham boasts outstanding faculties and well-designed facilities, leading me to experience my overseas life in a harmonious atmosphere. EMFL is a fantastic programme with our excellent programme leader, Dr Goodyear, and brilliant classmates. In the dynamic and informative class, I embrace the profound culture of the English world, enhance my language skills, and ‘map’ a blueprint for my future. I am fortunate to have joined the EMFL.”

- Huaichong Yao

“The EMFL programme and the experience I have had here since I started at the end of September have given me three strong impressions. Firstly, the learning model here has helped me increase my autonomy in my studies, and I need to organise my time wisely to balance my life and studies. Secondly, the programme has helped me to see myself and the world from a different perspective and broaden my horizons. And finally, although living and studying abroad can be stressful, it has taken me out of my comfort zone and is helping me to develop my independence and skills.”

- Leyuan Zhang

Led by Dr John Goodyear, Lecturer (Teaching) English as a Modern Foreign Language (EMFL), this brand-new programme supplements the suite of languages offered by the Department of Modern Languages at undergraduate level: French, German, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese. The introduction of the programme is informed by the considerable departmental strengths of foreign language delivery, blending Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) with the teaching and learning philosophy of the Birmingham Language Graduate (BLG). The introduction of the programme has also been supported by the China Institute with its knowledge base, its network of contacts and its institutional ties with Chinese partners. This support has been definitive in securing the first high-calibre students through our articulation agreements, something that has benefited the EMFL programme, the Department of Modern Languages and also the wider university.

AUTOMOTIVE COLLABORATION IN CHINA

**Professor Hongming Xu, Director of the Birmingham CASE-V Automotive Research and Education Centre**

**Dr Quan Zhou, Assistant Professor in Automotive Engineering**

Despite restrictions caused by the pandemic, collaborations in China around Automotive Engineering continued to strengthen throughout 2022.

Professor Hongming Xu was elected the founding chairman of the Global Alliance of Overseas Chinese Societies of Automotive Engineers (GAOCASE) which is accepted as a strategic partner of the International Federation of Automotive Engineering Societies (FISITA). This group worked with other members of the alliance in organising the second Global Connection of Overseas Chinese Automotive Engineers that was held on 4-6 November 2022 and was attended by 158,000 people.

The Birmingham CASE-V Automotive Research and Education Centre (CASE-V) worked closely with the China-Britain Business Council, hosting a CBBC Automotive Event in Jan 2022 and is set to organise a second networking on the University campus in Jan 2023.

The CASE Centre hosted its industry forum in Sep 2022 and welcomed a senior engineer from Chang’an UK to deliver a talk about fuel cell technology.

In July, the University of Birmingham hosted the annual conference for the Association of British Chinese Professors (in which Professor Xu is Vice-President for Membership and Events). The Conference attracted over 400 registered participants from the UK and China (over 200 on site), and also other countries and regions. Professor Adam Tickell, Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Birmingham, attended the conference and delivered a talk in the opening ceremony.

Working with colleagues from partner institutions in China, including the prestigious Tsinghua University of Beijing, Professor Hongming Xu and Dr Quan Zhou organised international academic events including the IEEE/CAA International Conference on Vehicular Control and Intelligence (CVCI) and the CSICE Conference on Transportation Energy and Intelligent Power (TEIP), both of which were attended by over 300 participants.

All of these activities have continued to establish a firm foundation from which we will build in 2023, further expanding our research and teaching into this key area of international collaboration.

NEW RESEARCH COOPERATION WITH SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY OF FINANCE AND ECONOMICS (SWUFE)

**Professor David Dickinson, Department of Economics**

The Department of Economics has had a long-established cooperation with SWUFE, based in Chengdu, involving research as well as educational cooperation. In the last 12 months, discussions have led to the creation of the joint SWUFE/Birmingham Climate Finance Laboratory at the Research Institute of Economics and Management (REIM).

Professor Dayong Zhang, an alumnus of the University of Birmingham, is a member of REIM and a key figure at SWUFE in the creation of the Laboratory. The provision of market-led finance, to support the development of sustainable production and consumption, is an important mechanism to mitigate climate change and move the world to a sustainable economic structure. The creation of the Laboratory will strengthen the joint research between Birmingham and SWUFE and help tackle these critically important challenges.

The Journal of Climate Finance, to be launched in early 2023 in cooperation with Elsevier, is a joint venture with Professor Alessandra Guariglia of the Department of Economics. The work of the Climate Finance Laboratory will feed into this journal and will provide a way of enhancing reputation. In addition, the work of the Laboratory will link to that of the Sustainable Financial Innovation Centre led by Professor Hisham Farag of the Department of Finance at Birmingham. There are plans for the Laboratory to hold an annual conference and to publicise the work to financial markets and institutions that are involved in the provision of Green/ Climate Finance.

If there are any questions about the Laboratory please contact Professor David Dickinson at the Department of Economics (d.g.dickinson@bham.ac.uk).

NINA MORRIS: A SHINING EXAMPLE OF SUPPORT FOR UOB-CHINA PARTNERSHIPS, CULTURAL AMBASSADORSHIP, AND IMPROVING EDUCATION EXPERIENCES

**Dr Simiao Sun, Assistant Professor in Hydrogeology**

**(Groundwater Science)**

Nina Morris, China Institute Officer, has been instrumental in every aspect of the University’s work with China, helping to forge and manage partnerships, being a British-Chinese cultural ambassador, and improving education experiences for applicants and students. Nina’s acute cultural awareness, her creative problem-solving, her tailored approach to different situations and people, and her dedication, have made many impossible situations possible in an environment of considerable challenges.

Nina has supported a large number of entry and articulation agreements, spanning the full spectrum of disciplines that the University offers. She is the go-to-person for all China-related people, projects, the most up-to-date information, and China-related achievements at UoB – which collectively represents an extensive and valuable expertise. In her unique position, Nina has also supported early-career Chinese academics by connecting them with the relevant people, networks, and opportunities.

Cultural awareness and creativity in problem-solving have been particularly important in navigating around the significantly different systems while promoting positive progress. Nina is particularly good at finding the commonalities that resonate with both audiences. At the same time, she is able to tailor her support to accommodate some delicate yet significant differences for different partners.

We often assume that education is provided by academics, underestimating how important administrative support has been in directly contributing to students’ full educational experience. One example involves Nina’s role in introducing the University and student experiences during China-facing recruitment events. Nina is able to present her talk in a combination of Chinese and English, which is often the most popular talk during such events. Prospective applicants and our partners are usually very impressed by Nina’s effort, which elicits notable respect and provides reassurance for the Chinese audience that Birmingham staff will go above and

beyond to help them.

The prospective students also appreciate the witty and interesting content being delivered and hence are more likely to reach out to Nina via her WeChat. Nina’s WeChat is not only a helpful part of being a cultural ambassador, but also has been used to connect applicants to prospective schools to aid their smooth transition to becoming a student.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of Nina’s work, but some examples of the great work that we are fortunate to have witnessed.

**Education with China**

Our Chinese student population remains a strong and vital part of our community. In November 2022, over 6,000 Chinese students were studying at our campuses in Edgbaston and Dubai, at the Jinan University-University of Birmingham Joint Institute (J-BJI), and on programmes we deliver at the Singapore Institute of Management, across all levels.

JINAN UNIVERSITY – UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM JOINT INSTITUTE

**Rachel Du Croz – Transnational Education Officer, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences**

The Jinan University – University of Birmingham Joint Institute (J-BJI) continues to go from strength to strength, and we are proud to report that J-BJI successfully passed the Ministry of Education audit, meaning that it has met the requirements of quality delivery for the running of schools in China.

Students studying at J-BJI completed dual degrees in Mathematics with Applied Mathematics, Information Computing Science, Economics, or Economic Statistics. The advantages of both international and local teaching methods are clearly demonstrated with many graduates pursuing further study around the world and in China or entering business at companies such as Deliotte, PWC, Ernst & Young, Tencent, and Bank of China.

This year, we were also proud to celebrate our second graduating class, who achieved an incredible 103 first class degrees. This year’s graduation was a live hybrid ceremony with students and colleagues gathering in Guangzhou. Vice Chancellor Professor Adam Tickell from the University of Birmingham and Professor SONG Xianzhong, President of JNU, presided over the ceremony, as Professor Chris Good, Deputy Dean and Head of the School of Mathematics, read the names of the graduates receiving their degrees on behalf of the University of Birmingham from Ms Vivian Zheng, Director of the Guangzhou China Office.

As well as progressing to study at PGT level in Birmingham on subjects aligned to Mathematics, destinations for our J-BJI alumni also include Yale University, the University of Cambridge, and the Harbin Institute of Technology.

We have been pleased to be able to return to some in-person teaching this year, which has been very well received by students, who welcomed the team back with (literal) cheers!

It has also been a time of change within the senior leadership, and we are delighted that Professor Jamie Alcock has joined the University of Birmingham as Deputy Dean for J-BJI. Jamie joins us from the University of Oxford with a wealth of experience of running international programmes and working in China.

We are also happy to welcome J-BJI Study Abroad students to our Edgbaston campus again this academic year, as well as supporting two excellent student activity projects in Badminton and Student Training through our Student Culture Fund.

Finally, we are looking forward to being able to return more fully to in-person teaching in China as COVID restrictions continue to ease.

ARTICULATION AND ENTRY

AGREEMENTS

We welcome students from our partnerships in China onto a range of programmes on both our Edgbaston and Dubai campuses, in disciplines including Engineering, Mathematics, Business, Modern Languages, Psychology, and Sports and Exercise Sciences – to name a few. This year we were delighted to welcome the first three students from partners onto BA English as a Modern Foreign Language (see earlier case study) and we are looking forward to continuing to welcome students in the coming years.

CHINESE SCHOLARSHIP COUNCIL

The University of Birmingham’s partnership with the Chinese

Scholarship Council (CSC) continues to flourish, and this year

we were pleased to once again fill our quota of 10 co-funded

PhD places, funding the study of successful applicants at the

University of Birmingham across a range of disciplines.

**Events**

LUNAR NEW YEAR

At the start of 2022, we were pleased once again to host our annual Lunar New Year Concert in a special online fusion of live music and performances sent to us from partners in China. To celebrate the Year of the Tiger, world-class pianist Di Xiao was joined by flautist Eimear McGeown, performers from Chinese musical arts centre Euphoria China, and featuring pre-recorded performances from the Nanjing Acrobatic Troupe and, for the first time, students studying at J-BJI in Guangzhou.

The concert was streamed on social media platforms Facebook, YouTube, and WeChat, reaching a global audience of over 5,000.

We were delighted to be able to share this wonderful concert with friends and colleagues across the globe, and to be able to include students from J-BJI in our celebrations.

2022 AGM AND TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION

CONFERENCE FOR THE JOINT INSTITUTE ALLIANCE (JIA)

On 13th –14th October, the University of Birmingham was proud to host the 2022 AGM and TNE conference for the JIA, supported by the British Council. This was an opportunity for staff involved in the running and delivery of collaborative education in China to meet in-person and online.

We were honoured to welcome Minister Counsellor for Education, Ms Jin Zhang, from the Chinese Embassy in the UK; Mr Mark Crossey, Interim Assistant Director – Policy and Global Engagement and Mr Eduardo Ramos, Head of Transnational Education from UUKi; and Mr Andrew Seaton, Chief Executive of the China Britain Business Council. We were joined online by Ms Leina Shi, Director Education China, British Council, and were delighted to receive a special video message from Ms Yan An, Deputy Secretary General, CEAIA. We were also very grateful to be addressed by senior colleagues from our partner institute Jinan University; Vice President An Hong and Prof Chunchao Wang, Dean, J-BJI.

The event was hosted by Professor Jon Frampton, Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor (China), and the delegates were welcomed by Professor Stephen Jarvis, Head of the College of Engineering and Physical Sciences and incoming Provost and Vice-Principal.

Panel discussions on High Quality Opening-up in Chinese Education, and TNE partnerships and ambitions within a legal and policy context led to insightful discussion among participants. Professor Sue Welburn, UK Convener of the JIA and Executive Dean of Zhejiang-Edinburgh Institute provided an update on progress from the last AGM and calls for new projects, and the Professional Services and Senior Managers network presented data on Joint Institutes and how the network can promote and support academic delivery in China.

The conference continued on day two with updates from the funded projects of the JIA looking into important issues on Supporting TNE communities during and post-pandemic, as well as Fostering Entrepreneurship Skills Development.

This was a wonderful opportunity to meet friends and colleagues online and in-person to discuss UK-China Joint Education Institutes and share good practice.

LI SIGUANG LECTURE

In our second ‘in person’ event of 2022, we welcomed Prof John Loughhead, CB, OBE, FREng, FTSE to deliver our annual Li Siguang Lecture on the topic of ‘Science Diplomacy with China – behind the headlines’. The talk focussed on how science diplomacy is used to advance the UK’s national needs, address cross-border interests, and meet global needs and challenges, whilst highlighting the way in which the UK works specifically with China in this context. The lecture was very well attended, and prompted many questions from engaged audience members. Following the lecture, a networking session allowed for further discussion and connections between Professor Loughhead, the audience, and members of the China Institute.

**Signing Ceremonies**

Although regular travel to China has been challenging, we have continued

to strengthen partnerships in China through hybrid signing ceremonies. Below is a small sample of some of the partnerships which we have facilitated through virtual signing ceremonies.

* In April, we signed a MoU with Tsinghua Shenzhen International Graduate School, to promote four areas: Biomedical and Health Engineering; Data Science for Healthcare; Smart City; and Environment Protection – working groups in each of these areas are being established to promote collaboration and we are exploring opportunities for exchange of postgraduate research students.
* Also in April, we signed a tripartite agreement with Jiangsu Industrial Technology Research Institute and Shanghai Yangtze Delta Innovation Institute that will strengthen the joint development of innovative research that creates real-world impact in areas such as nanoparticle technology, biomedicine, recycling solutions, and low carbon clean energy.

**Media and Digital Communications**

We promote our work in China through a variety of channels, including social media platforms WeChat, Weibo, Twitter and Linkedin. We also work closely with partner institutions in China to engage with Chinese media and raise the profile of our education and research collaborations through print, online and broadcast coverage.

The University of Birmingham engages with Chinese students, staff, and stakeholders based in China and in the UK through its official WeChat and Weibo accounts. As of 30th November 2022, we have 26,601 WeChat followers, representing a 20% growth on last year, and 33,905 Weibo followers, representing a 14% growth on last year. Weibo and WeChat stories that received the most engagements (reposts, comments, likes for Weibo and views for WeChat), have focused on a range of disparate topics, including posts celebrating the University’s birthday, our Research and Excellence Framework (REF) performance, and the Commonwealth Games. Other popular topics include student information, for example, pre-arrival information and information on language requirements.

This year, we also developed two reputational campaigns across our Chinese social media channels, designed to raise awareness of key research at UoB and increase engagement and followers. Our first piece, at the start of the year, covered research relating to discoveries in vertebrate palaeontology of China, and generated 90 new followers, 62 reposts, and 142 likes. Sticking with the theme of palaeontology, our second campaign later in the year focussed on the research taking place in the Guizhou Province of Southern China, leading to extraction of minute fossils representing the teeth and skeletal components of two types of early ‘shark’ (see earlier case study). This campaign achieved over 575 article views and generating 185 new followers.

Our China Institute Twitter account has 1,354 followers and is aimed at internal stakeholders and the local community. Popular posts were linked to events on campus, for example, our annual Li Siguang Lecture, the JIA conference and our Lunar New Year concert.

In terms of international media coverage, over the course of 2022, there were 6,458 articles published in Chinese media which referenced the University of Birmingham, and we achieved an Advertising Value Equivalent of £1.96 billion.

## **Contact**

For more information about the China Institute, or for further details on any of the projects and engagements referenced in this document, please contact Nina Morris,

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