

Considering An Academic Career in China Live Q&A

SPEAKERS

MI: Moderator

M2: Huaiyi Huang, Newton Research Fellow at the University of Warwick, UK

M3: Le Yang, Academic Visitor at the University of Sheffield, UK

M4: Shengqiang Chen, Academic Visitor at the School of Law, University of Sheffield, UK

M1: Good afternoon everyone. Welcome to the live question and answer session on considering an academic career in China, hosted by jobs@ac.uk. So if you're in the UK, good afternoon. If you're in China, good evening. If you're in the States, well, good morning. So we very much welcome audience member questions. I'm very much coming from this as an audience member myself. I'm curious about what the expert panel has to say. So the hashtag for you guys is #jobsq, that's jobsq, and our organiser will feed the questions through me and I can feed them onto the panel members. My name is Yuan, my academic background is studying undergraduate in the UK, then over to Northwestern for my PhD in the States, and now I'm an associate lecturer at Aberystwyth University, again in Wales. I'm delighted to be joined by three panellist members, authentic Chinese folk, all here in the UK right now, but with different backgrounds. I'll let them introduce themselves. So for our first panellist member we have **[unclear 00:01:18].**

M2: Hello everyone, my name's **[unclear 00:01:21]**. I come from China and I've got my PhD degree in **[unclear speech 00:01:27 – 00:01:29]**. I have been study abroad for two years. I have been a **[unclear 00:01:35]** student in University of Zurich in Switzerland, and now I've got funding now as a **[unclear 00:01:44]** in University of Warwick. After I finished my two years contract here I'm going back to find a position in some university in Shenzhen, a city next to Hong Kong.

M1: Thank you and maybe I can ask **[unclear 00:02:03] to tell me a little bit about yourself.**

M3: Hello everyone, I am **[unclear 00:02:09]**. I received my bachelor and master degrees in **[unclear speech 00:02:14 – 00:02:17]** and Technology of China. Studying from 2004 I began my forensic study and work in North America. I received my PhD degree from the University of Missouri, Columbia in 2010. After a one year work in **[unclear 00:02:35]** I'm heading back to China. Now I'm Associated Professor with Shanghai University in Baoshan, which is close to Shanghai, thank you.

M1: I should have asked what are your academic backgrounds. Mine is mathematics and what's your... You're an engineer, is that right?

M3: [Unclear 00:02:52] computer engineering. I also have background in neuroscience and psychology.

M1: Oh great, and [unclear 00:03:00] sorry I'll get to you.

M2: Sorry I forgot to tell that yeah, my background's medicinal chemistry.

M1: Okay great.

M2: I focus on anti-cancer drugs, yeah.

M1: Wow, oh wow, really useful things. And [unclear 00:03:12] tell the audience about yourself.

M4: Okay, hello [unclear 00:03:16] my name is [unclear 00:03:17]. I got all my degrees in China, the University of [unclear 00:03:23] University China and I got my PhD degree in 2011, and since then I joined the democracy of [unclear 00:03:34] province. I'm now Associate Professor and my major is law. I'm now Associate, I'm now a [unclear 00:03:43] staff of Sheffield University. That's all, thank you.

M1: Great, so thanks, so really good to see wide variety of experiences from our panellist members, so again I encourage the audience watching to send us your questions. The hashtag again is #jobsq. Right, so let's get started. Maybe the question that people [unclear 00:04:06]. Why China? So let's do a quick one first for everyone, like in two sentences, why would you want to work in China? And we can go into much more detail again after that. So start with [unclear 00:04:21]. Just so if you had to advertise this, what would you say?

M2: Okay, we are very welcome foreign [unclear 00:04:32] to start their career in China because we got quite a lot of fundings to support their research. And not only the fundings as well as high salaries to support their life in China, yeah.

M1: Okay, money, excellent. [Unclear 00:04:51].

M3: I'd say the same thing. It's pretty much easier to get funding, and you have a very good chance if you're really good, to establish your research group, of you know, maybe several or even tens of people to help you. That's much easier than in Western countries.

M1: Great leadership, okay. And [unclear 00:05:15].

M4: You know Chinese economic [unclear 00:05:20] and provide more opportunities for youngsters, and besides I think that teachers or researchers in Universities are always have high social standards in China, nowadays, yeah.

M1: Oh great, so youth development and social status.

M4: Yeah, I've got one more comment about, just now I didn't mention, in China, if you're got your own lab you don't need to pay for the postdocs or research assistants, I mean the university and the government will pay for that. You don't

need to use your funding to pay for them. It's quite different from here, because if you want to hire anybody, you need to pay them from your funding. But in China the government will support them. Yeah, it's quite different.

M1: Right okay, so while we're on that topic, I think, so maybe you can tell us about how groups and research groups are organised, and how the funding works, and some of those processes. Because I think part of the thing, as a Westerner is we don't really know how the system works, right? So we hear sometimes that there is money available, but how is it distributed, and you know, maybe just can you tell me, I don't even know what to ask? So [unclear 00:06:48] about how the funding situation works in China, and groups, and the [unclear 00:06:54].

M3: Okay, [unclear 00:06:58] so the funding basically can be divided into two major groups, so one is so called government funding. Second part is industry or something. The government funding can also be divided into you know, state funding, which has come from the national government. In engineering we have so called Natural Science Foundation of China, which is for short, NSFC, which is pretty close to NSF United States, and it's also very close to EPSR say in UK. So unless FC invites personal application, which is you know, just based on your own research, it could be three years per proposal for young investigators, whose age is less than let me say, 35. So for more senior researchers you can apply for four year's grant. The amount of funding let me say okay, depends on different majors. In my majors, like if I convert that value to GBP, it takes okay, let me say 30k for young investigators, maybe like 80k for a four year's proposal.

That's for the [unclear 00:08:15] and as for personal funding you can also have a research group for a type of bigger fundings, but that needs at least you know one PI and several core PIs. But that amount of money depends how the project could be million or billion, that depends on what you are doing. If you are for example, if you propose to launch a satellite to observe like you know, grey matters or black hole stuff, that could give you much more money. Yeah, significantly more money than that. So that's the state funding for you know, [unclear 00:08:52] funding at the... Like China has different provinces, so provincial government also provides fundings. But those fundings are somehow, let me say, diversified across the whole country. In some well-developed province like you know, in the coastal provinces, the fundings is you know, there are so many fundings that you may be able to apply and some fundings require you to have collaborations with some companies, with industries, so you can fire a joint proposal. Some fundings just likes NSFC, you have to fund your own topic and work on that for like three or four years before.

So that's basically whole funding system. So how to spend the money is a different question [laughter]. And we really have a very different accounting system than you know, different than western countries. For example as [unclear 00:10:05] told us that the postdocs and the research assistants actually are paid by the government, not by the funding of the faculties. So the faculties can use them only to do only several things, for example travel grants, conference registration, publication fee. We also pay like power, especially in some laboratories, you need to use you know, a lot of electricity, water, natural gases, those things. Another

significant portion of the money goes to facilities, like you can use them only to make your room looks better, buy like air conditioner, like mystery devices, equipments. So that basically only five directions you can spend your money. But the money I'm not, you know, in Western countries most of the money goes to like research assistantship, teaching assistantship, but in China it's not. You use your money for research purpose only, not for like human resources.

M1: Great, I've got to pause you there, and actually get onto that issue because, so the physical resources and financial resources are absolutely very important part. But I'm sure the people listening here care about their own jobs too. So on the human resource issue, maybe I can ask [unclear 00:11:32] what are the career prospects, and some maybe application processes, for people at different levels, right, so whether you are coming as a grad student, just finishing, or if you are a you know, if you have a few years research as a PDRA, or maybe even if you are a lecturer or professor or so on. So [unclear 00:11:51] would you tell us about what kind of things different people should apply for, and what kind of opportunities are available for people at different stages?

M4: Okay. Maybe you know that Chinese universities are divided into many classes. They are top 50 university in China. We are also top 100 university in China. I think that when you want to join the top 100 university in China, at least you have to get a PhD. I think that's the least certificate that for a human to come into join our university. And then if you want to go up to a higher rank you have to maybe, [unclear 00:12:47] are often open to [unclear 00:12:50] associate professors and PhD students. And when a new PhD students join the university, [unclear speech 00:13:01 – 00:13:05] to be our lecturer. And then they have to enter a university to do some research and teaching works. I think that it's up to private person to decide which [unclear 00:13:26] they will join. I think the more distinguished you are and the more choices you will have when you have to choose a university, and that's all.

M1: Great. Thank you [unclear 00:13:42]. I know we'll get to things like The Thousand Talents Program in a little bit, but we're getting some, quite a lot of stuff on Twitter. And so I'll ask, so these are some of the good things. So let me ask about some of the concerns some of our audience members have. So there's a couple. One is the Chinese language, famously difficult language to learn, even for Chinese people. So a question is, as an academic, do you need to learn Chinese to work in a Chinese University? I'll ask that to [unclear 00:14:17]. And also second, maybe more general, we'll keep it light, but under the current political climate, maybe we'll skip that. So what about the Chinese language, [unclear 00:14:33]?

M2: Okay, yeah, some of my friends in China, we also suggest them to apply for postdoc position in China. I mean for some PhD students in our group. And every time we talk about that they say 'Oh Chinese is too hard for them' [laughter]. But nowadays, older students in China, they are good at English. I mean maybe they always speak English not very good, but they can understand what the foreigners said. And so I mean working in China, language is not the biggest problem. And especially in academy facility. Most of the staff there, they got their master, or

some of them got PhD degrees there, they all can speak English. So it doesn't matter that if you want to start to work in China, then you start to learn Chinese. No it doesn't matter at all, yeah. And actually everybody would love to try to speak English with you, rather than Chinese, yeah.

M1: Great, oh go ahead, it's in China, what about daily life, does it depend on what area you're working in? You know, I know [unclear 00:15:56] wants to go back to [unclear 00:15:58] this is one of the rich, modern cities. But does it vary depending on where you are?

M4: I [unclear 00:16:07]. In metropolitan and the large cities many famous university is located there. And teachers or researchers in that famous universities are asking how much more [unclear speech 00:16:24 – 00:16:26] universities. And I think researchers and teachers are more flexible, maybe have more free time to them, than the administrative staff. [Unclear 00:16:40] administrative staff knew how to work from Monday to Friday and every day from 9 o'clock to 5 or 6 o'clock in the afternoon. But as a teacher, you do have to obey to this schedule. It only [unclear speech 00:17:04 – 00:17:06] you're teaching at your lectures [unclear speech 00:17:08 – 00:17:10]. You were asking that just now, I heard that. Someone had talk about another question about the [unclear 00:17:20] maybe about politicals. I think that. At university teachers they are [unclear speech 00:17:27 – 00:17:29] is very free now.

It's not [unclear 00:17:36] imagine and if you want to know what [unclear speech 00:17: 43 – 00:17:45] I recognise that, you can choose a Chinese University, and you are free research [unclear 00:17:53] and not only for natural science, but also for social science, as my major, even more. And my major is public law, that's about [unclear 00:18:03] law and administration law. And I can do my research freely as [unclear 00:18:08].

M1: Great, actually I've got to follow up, on the Twitter feed that I'm being sent, there's quite a lot of questions about from the humanities folk, because naturally there's different funding possibilities, so could you say a little bit about the funding possibilities for humanities? I know you're a law expert, and also whether there's space for early researchers in the humanities, as compared to the sciences?

M4: Okay, [unclear speech 00:18:37 – 00:18:39] the fundings are divided into two directions. One is [unclear 00:18:47] and the other is industrial parts. And a tutor come in to [unclear 00:18:54] they are also divided into two. One is the central government grants and the other is local government grants. I think that is quite easy, maybe you will not know how diversity the fundings are. When you enter our university, when it's time to apply for our funds, the administrative officers are the ones to notice that when it's time to apply for the finance. And for another [unclear 00:19:31] when you really have got [unclear 00:19:37] the accounting system is also very easy and as recognise that, you go through a process and [unclear speech 00:19:45 – 00:19:48] in China.

M1: Great, thank you. Maybe I go to [unclear 00:19:54] again, so we had some questions prepared, but the Twitter has been wonderful. So let me ask about

work, life balance. You mentioned that administrators need to sit in the office, but it's a bit freer for staff. So what kind of [unclear 00:20:16] is there for say an associate lecturer or lecturer, and also what kind of career progression is the system in China? Is it like the British system or is in the American tenure track system? So work and life and work.

M3: Okay, well the tenure system is more close to the U.S. one, so we don't have a lecturer. We only have assistant professor, but we call that lecturer before, it's equivalent to assistant professors. And we have associate professor, then we have full professor. In some schools we also have distinguished university professors, so that's basically the four like where you moved up. It depends on the university. So the tenure evaluation normally takes four to six years, but in the U.S it's normally six years only right. But for example in my school, we only give you one chance in four years. If you are not, you know, not good enough you might have to leave [over-speaking]. So that's the career path. Regarding the working load, well after you have received the tenure it's more like the Western countries. We don't have to worry about you will lose a job, so you can enjoy life or academia much more. But before that it's really you know, the work load is really intensive, I have to say. So the tenure evaluation normally look at your publication record. Your teaching evaluation, and amount of funding you have obtained. It's [unclear 00:22:08] funding only.

So they have a bottom line for each criteria, so I mean their success also depends on how many persons are applying for tenures that particular year. So if you are really, really good, but your competitors are also really good, so that year you may have some troubles. In China an administrative workload is relatively [unclear 00:22:37]. You know, as for my experience I am the Lab Director, I have two assistant professors working with me, but [unclear 00:22:50] so it's more like a Western style. They are allowed to work out what the research interest are, so I don't you know, give much restriction. But we do have regular, you know, interactions like group meetings, a weekly group meeting [unclear 00:23:14] review. But well, that's pretty much, and if we have funding opportunities such as can we also looking for chances we can jointly fire our joint proposal to some industry for example. But before they get a tenure I don't think I really have much administrative duties to you know, carry out. But I'm not sure what about the more senior faculties, if they try to manage like more than ten members that could be a different story.

M1: Okay great, so I'm getting some questions on the live chat about internet, so I guess this makes sense from academics. Can I open up to the panel, your thoughts on the Chinese firewall, and social media and stuff like that? You know, what kind of impact, if any or... What's your experience with that? And what's your experience maybe with the change, or the differences, whoever wants to answer?

M2: Sorry, yeah I mean for academic you don't need to worry about that. I mean they got all the access to different [unclear 00:24:36] groups. I mean you can [unclear 00:24:41] so for academies it's quite similar from here. But for as you said, for the Facebook and some other [unclear 00:24:50] I'm not sure. But I think because nowadays more and more foreigners is going to work in China, and I heard from

some of my friends that they told me that they can use VPN in China, so they can read those message, maybe yeah. And if necessary, I think they are allowed to use VPN, but I'm not quite sure about that yet. But for academy it doesn't matter, it's quite similar, you can do everything you want for academy, yeah.

M1: Is that also your experience [unclear speech 00:25:21 – 00:25:23]?

M4: Yeah, okay also other social communication you choose, also maybe in China at present, you cannot use our Facebook our teacher, but in China especially for foreigners. When you start enter in China, you have to do as locals, yes, at present. We don't have... You couldn't use Facebook, you couldn't use teacher, but we have the same location tools, you can use [unclear 00:25:53] yeah. You can use cuckoo and other communication tools, yes. [Unclear 00:26:03] when you decide to enter China you can do as what Chinese people do. You can have experience of, I think, a fantastic experience in China, okay.

M1: Great, thank you. So I'm getting some questions about finding what the requirements to find a job, and likely a good job in China. For instance if you want to talk about Talent Program, or Talent 1000, open that up. But also if you're just looking for any job. So what are the requirements? So is it true for instance, that the main dependency, the main requirement is the publication record, SCI journals and so on, or do they look at other things? Maybe I'll ask it to [unclear 00:26:53] who's telling me he's looking at the moment [laughter].

M2: Yes, for some experience for me, because I'm looking for a job in university now, so it depends. If you've got very high quality publications. But I want to let everybody know that in China now there's the high quality publication just mean science major and so, if you've got that kind of paper you can associate professor or [unclear 00:27:27] professor in China already. But everybody know it's very, very top level, so it's not that easy to get one. So if you don't get that kind of high quality papers then you can find some lower positions for example, research assistant professor or research associate professor, even lower levels, but the salaries is not that bad. [Unclear 00:27:57]. For example my own experience, I got an offer from Southern University of Science and Technology, it's a new university in Shenzhen, and they can give me assistant professor and I will start to work in a big group. Then I can use the funding from the pulse of the group, so I don't need to worry about too much of the starting fundings. But if you've got very nice publication, then the university will give you the starting fundings for you to set up the lab.

So yes, it depends on the publication. In natural science, yeah. But if you don't get too much publication you can still find it very, very easy to find a postdoc position in China, yeah. And if you can publish some excellent papers then you can promote to associate professor or assistant professor after you finish your postdoc.

M1: Great, so does anyone know something about the various talent programs? And how can the viewer find out about them? So for instance when I looked myself, they are largely in Chinese. Where might one go to find out what

exact requirements, different universities have? Because as far as I know, the different universities, depending on quality and so on have different offers, have different criteria. And where does the audience member, average audience member go to look for this information? [Unclear 00:29:52]?

M2: Okay only story I have the two foreign faculties apply for those talent programs in the past two years. Well to be honest with all the audience, we don't have a clear requirement, at least [unclear 00:30:10] so that's maybe one of the major difficulties for those foreigners to evaluate themselves. Because we don't make them public. For anyone who are really interested to apply for those programmes, so what I can suggest to them is that so if they first have to look for [unclear 00:30:35] university. Then they might, he or she might need to contact some persons there and talk to them, and say what are their expectations. So there is a long process. So you should start with this kind of process, then making sure you are, so it's like a kind of blind date, [unclear 00:31:02].

M1: Okay. So it's deliberately not that clear, right? Because [over-speaking].

M2: ...that clear.

M1: It's a prestigious position so...

M2: Right, right, right.

M1: ...find a job first, and then if you, there's some discussion and analysis of whether or not you might qualify?

M2: Yeah, yeah.

M1: Great. Okay, okay, that helps a lot.

M2: I also suggest, sorry, I also suggest if you are very good, good enough to apply for as you said, Talent Projects, young Talent Projects, these kind of projects in China, then I suggest you contact the Head of Department directly, because you can always find their email address on the website. And because I come from [unclear 00:31:50] university we've got quite a lot, 1000 young talents in our department, and normally they will contact the Head of our Department directly, yeah. That will be another way to do so.

M1: Good. So I think we should move onto a couple of the actual application process, because it's you know, I don't know yet. So maybe we can ask about... We've talked a little bit about criteria, right? So publications or experience in different levels, but what about like adapting the CVs or covering letters? Is there a particular standard that's appropriate? What kind of interviews take place, and how they take place? And some of the practicalities. And also later on, you know, functionally, how do you actually start working? Because moving is a big thing, and so we will talk about that as well, so maybe [unclear 00:32:46] first about the actual application process, so CVs, covering letters, interviews, so on?

M4: Okay, how to say that, someone said Chinese universities are divided into two direct categories. The first one is [unclear speech 00:33:04 – 00:33:06] universities and the other universities are belongs to the second category. I think that when you apply for, when you make a preparation for an interview, usually you have to choose the area, which city you want to go. And then maybe you have to find in the website, which are the top 100 or maybe 50 famous universities in China. Then you can look in their website, email their personnel departments, and there will also be a document to tell you how to apply for their tenure. And choose a specific process. I think that usually you will make enough preparation for yourself. I think I say that you have to make I think plenty CV of yourself and in the CV you will write your publications, your practice experience, your firms and other things to prove your academic skill. And you will send the CV to the personnel department. Usually at our school, our university there will be a personnel department to receive your CVs and after that you have to wait. Wait for the administrative officer to tell you will you have to interview.

At that time, and for teachers, when the exact date comes, you have to give a lecture about 20, 30 minutes on your major, on what you like. And then also there will be a large audience, and also experienced scholars at that school. After your lecture they will ask you something about research. Also think that when you apply for tenure at university, the university where you graduate is very important. Your work is where you graduate and the publications, I think they are both, they don't prove the same, but publication I think is most important.

M1: Okay. Ah, so here's an interesting question. So there are quite a few universities here in the UK in that now have joint partnerships with universities in China, so one thing that some people might look into is to work for the British university, but an affiliate in China. How does that compare to applying directly to a Chinese university? I'm not sure you have experience on this, but maybe if you can say something?

M2: Yeah, so nowadays you know, lots of western university have established their branches in China, in different cities. According to my knowledge, having working for one of them, just for half a year, so normally if you want to work for those joint institutions, so they may require you to work in China for like four to six months every year, and other time your work may be based in UK. And I'm not sure, maybe different universities have different policies, so some join to institutions, use the UK tenure system and someone use the Chinese tenure system. So that depends on what school you are really work for. And also some schools says okay you may be, your performance may be evaluated based your work in China or in UK, so that also depends. And for those schools, they could say that you can apply for fundings in both countries, that's one of the, you know, particularly attractive points. One of the difficult things that if you have a family, that could be a serious issue. Some guys I know, they have their families in UK, so they have to tolerate, you know, the family, so they have to look for family reunion every year, so that's maybe a big problem, four to six months, it's not short time.

Or sometimes in these universities are contract based. So you can sign like three years contract, or five years contract with this joint institutions have. I know someone who is working for that, but he is single [laughter] so that's a different

story. So think about it, if you are, if you like culture, diversity, that could be a good choice for you. Also have lot of funding experience, a lot of funding opportunities. But if you have a family looking for more stable you know, positions, that may not be an ideal choice.

M1: Great, I have a question from the audience about whether there's an advantage of an overseas Chinese, doing a PhD overseas, and then returning to China, versus Chinese students [unclear 00:38:55] a PhD in China. And the different experiences and competitive nature, and whether there's an advantage or not. So maybe [unclear 00:39:06] you...

M2: Yeah I'm the best candidate to answer this question because I just graduated right. So I mean, well nowadays quite a lot of local PhD students in China, they got very, very good publication compared with foreign, I mean [unclear 00:39:31] our CPhD Chinese PhD students. But don't worry about that because quite a lot of positions nowadays, they ask for foreign PhD degrees, but not the local PhD degrees. And even yeah, and even though some PhD students in China, they got nice publications, they also need to study abroad, for example me [laughter]. Yeah, so even some of the PhD students they got very nice publication overseas. But if you can start to work such as a research fellow in some big [unclear 00:40:12] then you got some publications, I think you can promote to better positions, sorry one by one I mean. It's not, I mean if you've got a foreign PhD degree you can find some cities, I mean if you just worry about [unclear 00:40:33] that is not a problem. And if you want to find a postdoc position that's not the problem as well. Even though you didn't got very nice publication, but this one point I need to admit that if you don't got enough publication you cannot apply for too high positions.

M1: Alright, I think we've temporarily lost [unclear 00:40:59]. We've got, but on that subject, maybe I can ask [unclear 00:41:04], let's go straight to the nitty gritty, so what is the money, what is the money like? How does it compare to U.S or UK institutions, not for the group, but just for the person salary? So maybe I can put that to [unclear 00:41:20].

M4: I think when choose to work in China, abroad, happiest is the most important, yeah. We can earn less money by U.S dollars or by [unclear 00:41:39] but we should see what's the [unclear 00:41:45] in the cities. For example my [unclear 00:41:52] located in the capital of [unclear 00:41:55] province, and the average living, maybe experience maybe about [unclear speech 00:42:04 - 00:42:09] in terms of city. And [unclear 00:42:12] teachers their salaries will be about 10,000 [unclear 00:42:23] a month and [unclear 00:42:25] is just 3,000 [unclear 00:42:27] so I think you will be able to have a higher living standard in China. And on that reason exact, many things it could be money, [unclear 00:42:45] in China is much cheaper than that of the Western countries. So that if you pay one dollar into U.S or UK you may can just buy a cigarette for example, but in China, it's enough for you to have a good meal. Yeah?

M1: So we have a question from the audience, about whether it's possible for foreigners to apply on some kind of joint programme, with a local Chinese research organisation? Not necessarily universities. So I know like on

jobs.ac.uk there are also other institutions that are possible. So maybe like with corporations or with science groups, so maybe [unclear 00:43:30] you can tell us a little bit about that?

M3: So the answer is yes, so we have fundings for those type of international collaborations. So one part is for industry and some you know, some Chinese cities have so called high tech industrial parks, so they can host this type of collaborations. For academic international research collaborations, the NSFC also has some funding for that. The problem is that you have to look for the Chinese partners first. So because they have the lead the applications, so that could be a problem, so you cannot simply find someone on a research [unclear 00:44:19] that's not possible. One of the good way out is that okay if the foreign faculties have visitors from China talk to them, if they have you know, common interests, they can plan for it, so it's kind of collaborations I will say it's quite personal, it's personalised. It's not like we cannot simply you know, [unclear 00:44:46] Western country, like we posted something on Twitter or Facebook and find the collaborators. But we have to be, this has to be done in a much more [unclear 00:44:56] way.

M1: So what if we step back a little bit. Instead of looking at specific jobs or even research collab, or funding collaborations. What about just research collaborations? I'm sure there's some people in the audience who are interested in working with Chinese researchers, right? Because there's a large talent pool, but may or may not come into contact daily. What would you recommend for those people? And maybe that's the first to build up some networks in order to in future consider...

M2: That's the key difference between the Eastern and the Western culture. The Chinese people, not every one of them, but many of them are not fully adapt to the so called email culture. We don't quite answer emails regularly, so that could be the problem. So I heard some complaints about the Western you know, researchers says 'Okay I'm trying to email someone in China, asking him for codes or for like sample materials, but they won't reply in like five or six months'. [Unclear 00:46:11]. That's quite normal in China because we rely more on instant messengers, you know, we chat, WhatsApp but we are not quite adapt to the emails. And for me it's kind of different but you know, I have been living Western country for more than eight years, so that's a different story. But the one good way to be collaboration with Chinese people is to attend the conferences, international conferences. Talk to them, so face to face communication could easily you know, I will say, easily build confidence and faith on both sides. And if they can exchange emails or even telephones, so that could be even better. That's a much more efficient way to establish or start networking.

M1: So maybe on that subject it's a good time, what are some of the research or cultural differences that will impact say audience members who aren't you know, ethnically Chinese or... Because I'm sure there are many out there. What are some things to bear in mind for those who are thinking of moving? And how can that impact actual practicalities? Do universities for instance provide services to help acclimatise new staff or training programmes or like social networks? Maybe [unclear 00:47:45] what do you think?

M2: I think the professor's way is quite similar, compared with UK here. In my field my [unclear 00:47:57] supervisor, he just need to focus on his classes and his research. And for the others, yeah if you want to get promotion in China, maybe you need to attend some social media, something like that, but normally you just need to focus on your research. If you do research in China it's the same, just everybody just care about papers you publish, so...

M1: Okay so going back to, okay, so focus on your work right? So going back to that, actually [unclear 00:48:37] earlier on I think he said his statement and the short part was leadership, being able to organise your own research groups and labs in China I mean, much more early leadership of groups. So maybe [unclear 00:48:53] you can tell us a little bit better, how does that work? So when would say a new researcher or early career staff expect to be able to start leading their own research?

M4: Is a little different from natural science.

M1: Okay, so you've gone from telling me about humanities first and then [unclear 00:49:13] will tell us a little bit more about the natural sciences.

M4: Okay, okay. Actually for new staff some universities [unclear 00:49:21] a research team, and when you be a new staff you have to join in one or another research team. But it's up to you. If you want to be a simple and happy teacher in universities, you can do your own initiative to do your own research. You can join another research teams. And social science researcher, I think [unclear 00:49:58] and publications are more important than other things. And for me, I think that [unclear speech 00:50:08 – 00:50:12] PhD students join university as a new staff, they really will be about two years for the advance [unclear 00:50:22]. And when you are a new staff you've got a PhD degree, you will also be the assistant professor. And then it will be two years for you to advance to be associate professor. You are distinguished enough. You can finish it in two years or three years. And after you are associate professor you are more free, you have more time to do your own research. At that time maybe you can be a leadership, you can front your own research team. But before that, I think that the most important things are two. One, is that you teach well.

Two, to get the praise from the students or other experienced teachers. The other thing is that you publicise as more publications as you can, and get as more [unclear 00:51:33] as you can. I think that you will be advanced very quickly, and then at that time you can say 'Yes I am not just a new staff now. I can do my own research now. I can choose which direction I like. And I will do it well'. That's just a brief introduction of [unclear 00:51:55] okay.

M1: So we'll get to the same question for [unclear 00:51:59] in just a minute, but there's a great question from the audience asking about the situation for female academics in China. So I noticed that we are all men I think, so what is the general position for female academics? Are there salary differences and what about maternity leave provision in Chinese universities? So [unclear 00:52:21] has volunteered to tell us about this.

M2: Yeah, because my girlfriend just got a position in Shenzhen as academic in [over-speaking]. Yeah, thank you. They are the same. The salary is the same, just depends on your position in the university. So there won't be any difference. You've got, they will allow you to have maybe half a year holidays for, I mean [laughter] to give birth to the baby, yeah.

M1: Isn't that a holiday? [Laughter].

M2: [Over-speaking] [laughter]. Yeah everything, it should be the same, but I mean it's really a little bit harder compared with male academic to find a job there, but still got chances, yeah.

M1: So [unclear 00:53:18] do you have anything to add to that? And tell us more about leadership roles in the sciences.

M3: Okay, so for like fresh graduates, for if you are just received your PhD establish your own, start your academic career, so basically in most cases you will be affiliated with bigger groups. In China, because the universities are much, much bigger, it's really much bigger, so it has much more faculties than Western countries.

M1: Let me interrupt, that's a great thing to raise. Just how big is the average you know, top 50 university in China, like you know, how many students? What are class sizes? So these practical things in the day to day interaction?

M3: So for engineering for my school for example, that's pretty much average. So the class size is around 40 students for one class.

M1: Okay.

M3: Normally you have to teach, you have to face two or three classes at the same time, so there's 80 to 120, but that's on the average. [Over-speaking] faculties like you know in my department we have 260. In [unclear speech 00:54:40 – 00:54:43] that's a lot, so we have, you know, at least five different directions. We have groups already. So when you're starting a top university such as you know [unclear 00:54:54] universities you have to getting started by being affiliated with an established group. So that's pretty normal condition. But you normally have a lot of freedom to account whatever you want. So after you receive a tenure, it depends on your interests and some other factors, but not quite important. So you may be able to start your own laboratory as a PI, that's one option. And the department normally allow two or three or five faculties to establish their own new labs if their starting conditions is sufficient, but that's for leadership I don't think leader comes out of nowhere.

So basically I'm sure you have a stronghold in a particular area, you have a lot of publications and you have foundings that, you have projects that may not be accomplished by a single person who may you know, trying to attract some new coming faculties to you group. But that also depends, like me, I'm doing [unclear 00:56:14] tracking and navigation several different things. But for me it took me

around five years to find two collaborators. Yeah that's not bad, but it's [unclear 00:56:30] slow, yeah.

M1: So we're coming up to the end of our time, so I don't wanna rush anything. Firstly, I'd really like to thank all the panellist members, but your jobs not done just yet. I'd like to thank jobs.ac.uk, the hosts at [unclear 00:56:49] you know, finding us and asking us to help. We're all volunteering, you know, this is just... Well I'm doing this just to find out more stuff, it's been really helpful for me. I do want to point the audience members to the careers advice section at jobs.ac.uk, where there's lots more information on this. As we said this whole video, maybe with minor edits, will go up on YouTube, and there'll be information there as well. But before that, maybe to conclude, so I'll give you one minute each, okay. So if you can tell me, I asked you at the beginning, very quickly, what you know, what was really good about working in China. So maybe you could give me the slightly longer version, so some take away that you know, from each of your perspectives. So we'll start again with [unclear 00:57:37]. One minute.

M2: Okay, don't worry about your publication and its appearance. You will be always got the chance to find a position in China. I mean in my case I just, I mean the PhD students, yeah. They have always got postdoc positions and also some research positions. So just if you want to, if you decide to work in China, it's not that hard to find a position. For most it's another thing, but if you work hard and work well then you'll surely get promotion, yeah.

M1: Alright, great, okay. So that's actually quite different to say the U.S. where there are many, many more PhD positions available than say postdoc positions, right? It's tough to find you know...

M2: Because in China the government and the city will pay for them, so the supervisor don't worry to pay the theory. Yeah.

M1: It's different to say in the UK as well, where like the next step can be tough after grad school. So how about [unclear 00:58:48] what do you think, one minute?

M3: Okay, [unclear speech 00:58:52 – 00:58:57] relatively long time then. As a Chinese I will say 'Welcome to China'. If you want to, if you really want an academic career in China you have to be strong mentally, because you have to adapt to the culture differences. But we do offer a very pleasant environment, a friendly environment with plenty of opportunities. I hope your journey, your academic journey in China will be challenging and rewarding, and you may be able to achieve you know, much more than you can imagine in China, it's an amazing country.

M1: Great, so wonderful, so opportunity and risk, right? So one minute left, so maybe [unclear 00:59:53] you can finish, and again thank you everyone and over to you [unclear 00:59:57].

M4: We live in a global village, yeah? Whereas before you come to China, play hard and work hard. Get as more publications as you can. And when you come to China you

have to remember that we [unclear 01:00:17] PhD students in China and the other abroad PhD students are equal. If you want to do well in China you have to be strong. Strong enough and will come to China if you want to have a different experience that's different from Western country, okay.

M1: Great, wonderful, so thank you again everyone. And again so for the audience, look up jobs.ac.uk where there are lots of Chinese jobs that are available at the moment. And thank you from me as well, here in Wales, cheers.

END OF TRANSCRIPT