

Working at Chongqing Medical University/ University of Leicester Joint Educational Institute

What is the Joint Educational Partnership?

The Joint Educational Partnership between CQMU (Chongqing Medical University) and UOL (University of Leicester) was established in 2020 and welcomes around 115 students each year onto its dual award in Clinical Medicine. The partnership became an institute in 2024 and will expand to include two undergraduate programmes: Physiotherapy and Psychology and an MSc in Molecular Cancer Cell Biology. The EAP teaching team is responsible for 60 credits of English for Specific Purposes modules in the first year of the programme. You can read about the partnership [on the University of Leicester website](#).

Where is it located?

Teaching takes place at the IMC (International Medical College) on the Jinyun campus of Chongqing Medical University in University Town, Shapingba. Shapingba is west of the centre of Chongqing and about an hour's taxi journey away from the main business and commercial district. University Town is a vibrant area with restaurants, cafes and shops and close to the Daxuencheng metro station on [Line 1](#).

Who is the team?

- The EAP teaching staff in Chongqing are part of Centre for International Training and Education (CITE) at the University of Leicester.
 - The EAP teaching team is supported by staff based in Chongqing and staff based in the UK.
 - The team consists of one centre manager responsible for academic matters, a small team of coordinators and the EAP tutors. We expect there to be around 15 CITE staff living and working in Chongqing in the next academic year.
 - Several members of the subject departments fly out to China regularly.
 - There are currently 3 China-based administrators dedicated to assisting all University of Leicester staff.
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What is the accommodation like?

Tutors are currently provided with single occupancy studio apartments about an hour's walk from the Jinyun campus. Many teachers choose to take a Didi (Uber) to work. The serviced apartments are furnished with a double bed, sofa, desk and dining table. The bathroom is en-suite and contains a western-style toilet. There are no provided cooking facilities in the studio flat but there is a washing machine, sink and fridge. There is a large, shared kitchen and a pool table on the 6th floor. The apartment building is in a well-connected neighbourhood, with a local supermarket, restaurants, pharmacy and other shops.

What eating options are there?

The campus offers a staff-only canteen close to the staffroom and a large, multi-story canteen for both staff and students, open all day. There are multiple food stalls in the canteen offering food from across the region and other parts of China at extremely affordable prices. There are also several vendors selling coffee, fruit, baked goods, juices and snacks. There are two small supermarkets on campus selling groceries as well as goods for the home such as washing up liquid, tissues, slippers and stationery. There are countless eating possibilities off-campus and numerous restaurants, supermarkets and convenience stores near the apartments. With the Alipay app, it is also possible to order delivery from various restaurants and shops.

I have dietary restrictions. What will I be able to eat?

Many teachers prepare food at home and have bought appliances for their rooms to allow them to do this. Supermarkets are plentiful and there are a number of international supermarkets, such as Olé accessible by taxi (40 minutes).

Vegetarian and Vegan

- It is possible to purchase vegetarian food in the canteens on campus.
- There are a number of Buddhist restaurants, often near temples which serve vegetarian and vegan food.
- There is a vegetarian restaurant in a shopping centre in University Town which also serves vegan food and with research, it would be easy to find more in a city the size of Chongqing.

Halal

- There are a number of restaurants serving Halal food in Chongqing. There is a large concentration of these restaurants in the Muslim quarter in the Jiefangbei area.

Gluten-free

- Gluten-free is not a recognised diet in China and tutors who are celiac/ need to maintain a gluten-free diet are advised to bring products from the UK to enable cooking at home.
 - The international supermarket, Olé sells some gluten-free products.
 - Products can be purchased online from an English-translated App: Baopals
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Cost of living

Taxis, food, and goods are relatively inexpensive. For example, a large bottle of water is about 30p, 10 dumplings at a street stall are £1 and a 40-minute taxi ride is about £6.00. Starbucks coffee, western food and western clothing are similar to western prices.

What is the weather like?

Autumn, winter and spring are pleasant with the temperature rarely dropping below zero. Rainy season starts in March/ April and can also see temperatures reaching 30 degrees. The weather is very hot and humid in the summer.

What does the area offer?

The campus has a sport's field and courts which can be used by staff. There are gyms near the apartments which tutors have successfully joined. Some of the hotels have swimming pools which you can pay to use. The closest pool hotel to the tutor's apartments is the University Town Holiday Inn.

Chongqing is an extremely large, busy and populous city. There are a plethora of entertainment and leisure activities: sightseeing, hot springs, karaoke, shopping, eating out, cinema, temples, dance classes. Transport links are excellent but in such a large urban area it takes time to travel from location to location.

What do teachers do on the weekend?

Weekends can be as relaxing or as busy as you choose. There is plenty to see in Chongqing from a tourist point of view, but also a quieter lifestyle is an option, with interesting walks, spacious green parks and coffee shops near the accommodation and the campus. The Line 1 metro station runs through University Town providing connections to the centre of Chongqing. The closest high-speed train station is Shapingba from which you can take the bullet-train to other cities. Chongqing has an airport, approximately a one-hour taxi journey from University Town. Flights depart to cities across China and are relatively inexpensive.

What support does the University of Leicester offer at CQMU?

- Visa, flight bookings and risk assessments handled by the CITE team at University of Leicester
 - Insurance cover
 - Furnished free accommodation with utilities and Wifi
 - A university work laptop for use on assignment
 - Assistance with settling in through welcome pack for apartment, campus tour, IT support and support with using WeChat and Alipay
 - A pre-paid food card to use in the canteen
 - Weekly meetings with coordinators to plan lessons and understand materials and assessments
 - Free Chinese classes (pre-intermediate level)
 - Flexible return flight, within an agreed budget
 - Storage for items you want to keep in China between semesters
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What are the challenges of living in China?

- Outside of the main cities, there are few tourists and few people who can speak English. Apps such as Alipay, Baidu translate and DeepL which can translate from text, picture and audio and we will recommend you download these before you arrive. Free pre-intermediate level Mandarin classes are offered to our EAP tutors.
- Although travelling between cities is easy, visitors should be prepared for long distances between high-speed train stations and the city.
- Phones reign supreme in China. They are needed to read menus, order taxis, show tickets, navigate around a city and pay for things; not having a Smartphone would be a significant challenge and we strongly recommend that you bring a phone that has capacity to download the Apps needed to manage travel, payment and translation in China.
- Living conditions may be different to those you are used to at home. Apartments are rarely sound-proofed, kitchens are small and modestly equipped with counter-top devices rather than an oven, finishes may be rough: it is not unusual to see plaster coming off walls or concrete blocks piled up outside a building, and furniture may be basic. The apartment and utilities are provided by the accommodation management company and as such, you will have little control over when repairs take place. This can be frustrating.
- Outside of the home, workplace and airport, you may find it difficult to find a western-style toilet. Public toilets may not meet your standards of cleanliness.
- The internet connection is generally good but during peak times, the connection may drop. Streaming is not always possible.
- China has a firewall which means that some websites and streaming sites are unavailable. Although banned, many people in China, both nationals and visitors, use a VPN which masks your location.