

China Scholarship Council-Surrey Award

Guidance Notes

For October 2027 entry only

Studentship Application Deadline: 11 January 2027

PhD Start Date: October 2027

These guidance notes should be read alongside the **China Scholarship Council-Surrey Studentship Application Form**

Overview

The China Scholarship Council-Surrey Award supports eligible candidates applying to undertake a PhD at the University of Surrey.

The application process involves separate applications to the **University of Surrey** and, for candidates shortlisted by the University, to the **China Scholarship Council (CSC)**.

You will need to:

1. submit an online application for a place on an eligible University of Surrey PhD programme;
2. submit a completed China Scholarship Council-Surrey Studentship Application Form; and
3. **if shortlisted by the University of Surrey**, submit a separate application directly to the China Scholarship Council.

Late applications will not be accepted.

How to Apply

Step 1: Apply for a Surrey PhD programme

You must submit an online application for a place on your chosen University of Surrey PhD programme by:

11 January 2027

Applications can be made through the relevant programme page on the University of Surrey's PhD programmes website.

When completing your application, please indicate that you are applying for the **China Scholarship Council-Surrey Award**.

Please note that **PsychD, MD and EngD programmes are not eligible** for this studentship.

Your fee status will be determined as part of your application for admission to the University. You may be asked to complete a fee status questionnaire following submission of your online application.

For queries about your online PhD programme application, please contact:

admissions@surrey.ac.uk

Step 2: Submit your Studentship Application Form

The **China Scholarship Council-Surrey Studentship Application Form** must be:

- completed electronically;

- completed by you in conjunction with your prospective supervisory team;
- completed and signed in all relevant sections;
- saved as a **PDF**; and
- emailed to doctoralcollege@surrey.ac.uk by **11 January 2027**.

Your prospective supervisory team may submit the completed form on your behalf.

Please use only the space provided in the Studentship Application Form. You may add rows to tables where necessary, but you should **not attach additional pages or supplementary material**.

Any additional documents submitted with the Studentship Application Form, for example a separate personal statement or covering letter, will not form part of the assessment.

You should receive confirmation of receipt within five working days of submitting your Studentship Application Form.

Incomplete, unsigned, or late applications will not be accepted.

Step 3: Apply to the China Scholarship Council

You should **not submit your direct CSC application as part of the initial Surrey studentship application process**.

If your application is shortlisted by the University of Surrey, the Doctoral College will contact you and you will then be invited to apply directly to the China Scholarship Council.

CSC application period/deadline: March 10-April 1st 2027 (TBC)

Further information about the CSC application process is available from the **China Scholarship Council**.

Eligibility

You should ensure that you meet both the University's requirements and the relevant China Scholarship Council requirements before submitting your application.

Under the existing scheme guidance, candidates should:

- be citizens of the People's Republic of China, with overseas Chinese students potentially eligible subject to CSC policy at the time;
- meet the relevant University of Surrey academic entry requirements;
- meet the required level of English language proficiency;
- satisfy any additional application criteria specified by the CSC; and
- acknowledge the CSC requirement relating to return to China following completion of studies under the programme.

CSC Priority Research Areas

Applications from across the University's eligible research areas may be considered. However, the existing guidance identifies the following as CSC priority research areas:

- Computer Science
- Electronic Engineering
- Space Engineering
- Sustainability, with relevance to net-zero, environment and the water-energy-food nexus
- Manufacturing

- Healthcare Technologies and Biomedical Engineering
- Psychology, Mental Health and Psychiatry
- Food Science
- Veterinary Medicine
- Translation Studies

Applicants should indicate in **Section 2** of the Studentship Application Form whether their proposed project falls within one of the CSC priority research areas.

If the project does **not** fall within one of the priority areas, the prospective supervisory team should use **Section 8** of the form to explain why the application should nevertheless be considered under the scheme.

English Language Requirements

The English language requirement varies between PhD programmes. You should check the requirements for your chosen programme before submitting your application.

If you did not provide evidence that you meet the University's English Language Requirements when submitting your online PhD application, you must provide the required evidence to the Admissions Team by:

8 February 2027

Please send or provide the required evidence to:

admissions@surrey.ac.uk

Applicants to this scheme are not eligible to use Pre-sessional English language courses to meet the requirement.

Please note: You will only be eligible to be shortlisted by Surrey and put forward to the CSC if you have submitted evidence of your English language qualification **by the specified deadline.**

Completing the Studentship Application Form

The following guidance corresponds directly to Sections 1 to 10 of the 2027 Studentship Application Form.

Section 1: Personal Details

Complete this section with your personal details.

University Number (URN)

Your University Number, also known as a **URN**, is the seven-digit reference number issued following creation/submission of your online application for a University of Surrey PhD programme.

If you have not received your URN before the Studentship Application Form deadline, you can submit your form, but you must email doctoralcollege@surrey.ac.uk with your URN once you receive it.

(This should be within 5 days of studentship application submission)

If you experience problems with your online PhD application, please contact admissions@surrey.ac.uk.

English Language Requirements

Please indicate whether you currently meet the University's English Language Requirements.

If you have not yet provided evidence to Admissions, you must do so by **8 February 2027**.

Section 2: Programme Details

This section identifies the Faculty, PhD programme, Department or School, and, where relevant, Research Centre to which you are applying.

The faculties are:

FABSS: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

FEPS: Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences

FHMS: Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences

Applicants to the **Department of Higher Education** should select **FABSS**.

You should also indicate whether your project falls within one of the CSC priority research areas listed in these Guidance Notes.

Section 3: Education and Qualifications

This section provides the Selection Panel with evidence of your academic achievement and preparedness for doctoral research.

Please provide details of the higher education qualifications and degree programmes you have completed or are currently completing.

If you have not yet received the final result for a qualification, enter your **anticipated result**.

If you have more than one relevant qualification at the same level, include all qualifications relevant to your application.

Research projects

If you undertook a research project as part of your undergraduate and/or postgraduate studies, provide:

- the title of the project;
- a brief description of the project; and
- the result, grade, or anticipated result.

Academic prizes and scholarships

Include any relevant prizes, scholarships, or other awards for academic performance.

Research outputs

Provide details of any research outputs you have authored or co-authored. Examples may include:

- journal articles;
- conference presentations;
- patents;
- inventions; and
- other appropriate research outputs.

Research prizes and recognition

Include relevant recognition for your research, such as:

- conference prizes;
- research or innovation prizes;
- prizes for inventions, patents, or written work; or
- success in relevant competitions.

Professional experience

Include employment, research, practice-based experience, internships, or placements that are relevant to your proposed PhD and strengthen your application.

You may add rows to the tables where additional space is required. **Do not attach additional pages.**

Section 4: Personal Statement

Use your Personal Statement to explain:

1. how your previous experience demonstrates that you are an excellent candidate;
2. how your previous experience has prepared you for doctoral research and the proposed project; and
3. how undertaking this PhD will support your career aspirations.

Word limit: 250-500 words

You should use this section to build on the evidence provided in Section 3 rather than simply repeating it.

The Selection Panel will use the information provided to assess your potential as a scholarship holder.

Section 5: Research Project Proposal

You should develop this section in discussion with your prospective supervisory team.

Executive Summary

Describe your proposed project in a way that can be understood by a non-expert audience.

Maximum: 150 words

Project Proposal

Set out the proposed research project clearly and concisely.

Word limit: 500-1,000 words, including references

Avoid unnecessary specialist terminology and jargon. Members of the Selection Panel may not be specialists in your particular research field, so your proposal should be understandable to a broader academic audience.

Assessors will be looking for evidence of:

- a clearly articulated research project;
- a coherent and well-considered plan for doctoral study;

- an appropriate understanding of how the proposed research sits within the existing field; and
 - alignment with the University's research priorities and potential for impact.
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Section 6: Project Costing

This section should be completed **in conjunction with your prospective supervisory team**.

Provide an estimate of the costs required to undertake the project, excluding **tuition fees and stipend**.

Depending on the nature of the project, costs may include:

- consumables;
- conference costs;
- travel; and
- other project-specific research costs.

For each cost, explain clearly how it will be met. If funding for a particular cost has not yet been identified or confirmed, make this clear.

The existing guidance requires both an estimate and an explanation of how these costs will be met.

This section is not an application for additional funding.

The information is requested so that assessors can consider whether the proposed project is financially and practically feasible.

Section 7: Supervision

This section must be completed by your prospective supervisory team.

You must have **at least two academic supervisors from the University of Surrey**.

The Primary and Secondary Supervisors should provide the number of PhD projects they are currently supervising:

- as Primary Supervisor; and
- as Secondary Supervisor.

Only the number of current supervisory commitments should be provided. Do not include the names or personal details of current PGRs. Please note that the University's current supervisory limit is six supervisory commitments as Primary Supervisor. **Applications that would result in a supervisor exceeding this limit cannot be supported under this scheme**

Expertise of the Supervisory Team

The supervisory team should explain:

- the relevance of their expertise to the proposed project;
- the role each supervisor will play;
- how their respective areas of expertise complement one another; and
- where applicable, relevant information about an early career researcher or academic within the team.

Maximum: 250 words

Assessors will consider the relevance of the supervisors' research expertise, their respective roles, and the overall strength of the proposed supervisory structure.

Research Environment and Training

Briefly describe the research environment and the relevant training and expertise that will be available to support the researcher.

Maximum: 250 words

Section 8: University Research Strategy

This section must be completed by the prospective supervisory team.

Explain how the proposed project and applicant align with the University's Research Strategy.

In particular, explain:

- how the proposed research will contribute to addressing the University's **Grand Challenges**; and
- how the research is expected to deliver impact.

If the project does **not** fall within one of the CSC priority research areas, also explain why the application should be considered under the scheme.

Maximum: 350 words

Section 9: Applicant Declaration

You must sign and date the declaration to confirm that the information you have provided is complete and accurate.

By signing the declaration, you also acknowledge that it is your responsibility to ensure that:

- all required parts of your application are completed;
- your application is submitted by the relevant deadlines; and
- your prospective supervisory team completes and signs the relevant sections.

Electronic signatures are accepted.

Section 10: Supervisor and Head of Department/School/Centre Declaration

The **Primary Supervisor** and **Secondary Supervisor** must sign and date the form to confirm that the information provided is complete and accurate.

The relevant **Head of Department, Head of School or Head of Centre (HoD/HoS/HoC)** must also sign the form to confirm that adequate resources are in place to support the studentship application.

Unsigned applications will not be accepted.

Application Checklist

Before your application is submitted, check that you have completed all the following:

- ☐ Submitted your online application for an eligible University of Surrey PhD programme by **11 January 2027**
- ☐ Completed Sections 1 to 6 of the Studentship Application Form, as applicable
- ☐ Worked with your prospective supervisory team to complete the relevant project and costing information

- ☐ Asked your prospective supervisory team to complete **Sections 7 and 8**
- ☐ Signed and dated the applicant declaration in **Section 9**
- ☐ Obtained the **Primary Supervisor's signature**
- ☐ Obtained the **Secondary Supervisor's signature**
- ☐ Obtained the **Head of Department/School/Centre's signature**
- ☐ Saved the completed application form as a **PDF**
- ☐ Checked that you have not included additional pages or supplementary statements
- ☐ Submitted the completed Studentship Application Form to doctoralcollege@surrey.ac.uk **by 11 January 2027**
- ☐ Arranged for any outstanding English language evidence to be provided to admissions@surrey.ac.uk **by 8 February 2027**

Your supervisory team may submit the Studentship Application Form on your behalf.

What Happens Next?

Once the Surrey application deadline has passed, applications will be assessed.

The existing scheme uses a three-stage Surrey assessment process:

1. applications are assessed and scored by two academic reviewers;
2. applications and reviewer scores are considered by a Central Panel; and
3. shortlisted candidates are put forward to the CSC and invited to make their direct application to the China Scholarship Council.

Surrey shortlisting outcome

Applicants informed of the Surrey selection outcome **by 8 March 2027**.

If you are selected for nomination, we will issue you with a Surrey Funding offer letter, confirming our tuition fees waiver.

If shortlisted, you must then submit your application directly to the China Scholarship Council in accordance with the CSC's requirements and deadline.

Final outcome

The final outcome of the scholarship is expected to be announced by the CSC in **May-June 2027**.

Contact Information

Questions about the CSC-Surrey Awards Studentship or Studentship Application Form
Doctoral College

doctoralcollege@surrey.ac.uk

Questions about your University of Surrey PhD application or English Language Requirements

Admissions

admissions@surrey.ac.uk