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# Update: May 2025 China-Australia Joint Institute and Joint Program approvals

### (Information as at 17 June 2025)

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| Key points* In May 2025, China’s Ministry of Education (MoE) released the latest round of approvals under the Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools (CFCRS) initiative.
* Two new China-Australia Joint Institutes and four new Joint Programs were approved. This represents the highest number of China-Australia arrangements approved since 2020, although Australia was not among the top ten foreign partners in the latest approval round.
* Regulatory barriers for transnational education arrangements with China exist but remain stable. For example, Australian universities are unable to establish independent, ‘stand‑alone’ branch campuses (as with examples in India, Indonesia and Vietnam) as a Chinese partner is required. This is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.
* There are limited exceptions, such as in Hainan where a foreign institution can establish an independent institute or campus under certain circumstances and in line with other regulatory requirements. To date, no Australian institutions have established an independent institute or campus under the Hainan model.
* CFCRS joint institutes and programs are approved under the *Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools*, first published in March 2003 by the State Council.
* In 2006, the ‘Four One Thirds Rule’ was introduced to ensure that foreign education partners commit to contributing more than one third in four key areas: program units, specialised core units, responsible teaching staff (in specialised core units) and academic hours.
* Joint institutes can be established with or without independent legal entity status. All joint institutes are required to have a Chinese partner, regardless of their legal entity status, (except under limited circumstances in Hainan). This partner is responsible for ensuring that the institute is administered, and that teaching is delivered in a way that aligns with Chinese Government requirements. This includes implementation of the Four One Thirds Rule.
* The MoE is increasingly approving new joint institutes that offer their Chinese students with the option of completing their full program onshore in China (referred to as 4+0). Most students at a joint institute or joint program approved under a 4+0 model will still opt to spend some of their four years of study offshore (usually a 3+1 or 2+2 model).
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## New China-Australia approvals

In May 2025, two new China-Australia joint institutes were approved at the university level, four new joint programs were approved, one at the university, and four at the higher vocational level. A list of active China-Australia Joint Institutes is at Attachment A.

While approvals are on the rise, they are still well below the peaks seen in 2002–2004 and in 2011–2013, when approvals for Australia-China joint institutes and programs were around five to six times higher (with an average of 33 to 37 new approvals per year (see Attachment B).

In addition to the new approvals, two Australia-China joint institutes and 21 joint programs were renewed. This brings the total active Australia-China CFCRS arrangements (above and below degree) to 17 active joint institutes and 156 active joint programs. In total, 28 Australian universities and 20 VET providers have a CFCRS joint institute or program. Projects that have expired within the past 18 months are considered ‘active’ for the purpose of this Update as they may be undergoing renewal or reactivation.

### University level

**Table 1: China–Australia Joint arrangements at the Bachelor Degree Level and Above, newly approved in May 2025**

| Institute/ Program | Location | Australian partner | Chinese partner | Name of joint institute/program offered | 4+0 | Intake/year |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Institute | Jiangsu | Macquarie University | Nanjing Normal University  | Nanjing Normal University Macquarie University Joint Institute | yes | 330 |
| Institute | Jiangxi | Griffith University | Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics | Griffith Digital Intelligence School, Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics | no | 300 |
| Program | Jiangsu | Monash University | Jiangnan University | Bachelor of Business with a major in Business analytics and statistics | no | 100 |

Source: Compiled by Australian Government Department of Education, Education and Research Section, Australian Embassy Beijing from the Chinese Ministry of Education’s website,[中华 人民共和国教育部 中外合作办学监管工作信息平台](https://jsj.moe.gov.cn/), [Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China Information Platform for the Supervision of China-Foreign Jointly-Run Schools], information as of 13 May 2025.

### Higher vocational level

**Table 2: China–Australia Joint arrangements at Higher Vocational level, newly approved in May 2025**

| Institute/Program | Location | Australian partner | Chinese partner | Name of joint institute/program offered | Intake/year |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Program | Zhejiang | Australian Institute of Music, Australia | Zhejiang Vocational Academy of Art | Completion Certificate of Music (Performance Vocal Music） | 70  |
| Program | Zhejiang | International College of Management, Sydney, Australia | Taizhou Vocational College of Science & Technology  | Associate Degree of Business | 90 |
| Program | Guangdong | William Angliss Institute of TAFE | Zhongshan Polytechnic | Advanced Diploma of Hospitality Management | 100 |

Source: Compiled by Australian Government Department of Education, Education and Research Section, Australian Embassy Beijing from the Chinese Ministry of Education’s website,[中华 人民共和国教育部 中外合作办学监管工作信息平台](https://jsj.moe.gov.cn/), [Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China Information Platform for the Supervision of China-Foreign Jointly-Run Schools], information as of 13 May 2025.

### Renewals

Increased student intakes were approved for 12 Australia-China joint programs in May this year, signalling that these partnerships have been successful and have achieved strong and growing demand for their programs. Increased intakes were seen in joint programs with an Australian universities based in regional or outer-metropolitan areas, and which had a teaching focus.

Analysing the fields of education among the renewed programs reveals a strong concentration in Engineering and Related Technologies (10), followed by Management and Commerce (5), Information Technology (3), Natural and Physical Sciences (2), Creative Arts (1), and Health (1). Of ‘Engineering and Related Technologies’, the top subjects are: artificial intelligence, data science and intelligent engineering, covering both vocational education and undergraduate education. Most of the new approvals adopt “3+1” and “4+0” dual-degree mode.

### Areas of Study

As expected, there has been a notable shift toward programs and institutes that align with China’s national education priorities in line with the **Outline of a Plan for Building China into a Leading Country in Education 2024-2035** and China’s digital education strategy.[[1]](#footnote-2) This is demonstrated by increases in approvals for engineering and information technology programs. Despite this, management programs remain the most dominant field, underscoring their continued appeal and relevance in China.

## Emerging and newly-established foreign partners

The May 2025 announcements saw a total of 46 joint institutes and 124 programs approved across all foreign partners. The United States topped the list with a total of 23 new joint institute approvals, followed by Russia (16), Malaysia (10), the United Kingdom (8), Italy (8), France (7), Germany (6), Belarus (6), New Zealand (6) and Korea (4).

Malaysia has seen the largest growth in approvals. Belarus, New Zealand, Italy and Russia also experienced growth. Cuba has emerged as a CFCRS partner for the first time, with 2 joint institutes approved. In 2025, across all China-Foreign joint arrangements, artificial intelligence, data science, intelligent engineering and other cutting-edge specialties have become the focus of new approvals, at both higher vocational and bachelor degree and above levels. China’s goal to deepen the integration of education with emerging technologies and industry can also be seen in the locations and disciplines that have been prioritised for approval.

### A regional perspective

This year, Jiangsu province had the highest number of China-Foreign joint institute and program approvals of all Chinese provinces—with 10 new joint institutes and 4 new joint programs approved with a range of foreign partners—followed by Zhejiang and Guangdong.

From 2023, Jiangsu has been piloting a reform allowing the province to cultivate CFCRS arrangements before MoE approval. Post understands that, of the 10 new joint institutes approved in Jiangsu in the May 2025 round, most had been cultivated ahead of their approval. In the same year, Jiangsu introduced the first ‘whitelist’ system for the CFCRS.

By 2024, Jiangsu aims to direct 20 per cent of its expenditure on education toward internationalisation and the provincial government has agreed to match funding for institutes where the foreign partner is listed among the top 100 QS universities. Concentration of CFCRS activity in coastal provinces reflects the Chinese Government’s designation coast areas as key zones for innovation and economic transformation (i.e. the Greater Bay Area and the Yangtze River Delta).

May 2025 saw the first joint institutes approved in the provinces of Yunnan and Jiangxi. Tibet remains the only region without any CFCRS institutes or programs.

#### Data note

New approvals at the higher vocational level and the bachelor degree level and above were loaded onto the website[中华 人民共和国教育部 中外合作办学监管工作信息平台](https://jsj.moe.gov.cn/), [Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China Information Platform for the Supervision of China‑Foreign Jointly-Run Schools], on 8 May 2025 and 13 May 2025 respectively.

The MoE does not release a consolidated list of CFCRS Joint Institutes and Joint Programs. Data are manually exported and analysed by the Education and Research Section, Australian Embassy, Beijing. The manual extraction process may lead to some inconsistencies in CFCRS reports.

#### Further reading

Additional Policy Updates published by Education and Research Section are available at [China Resources - Department of Education, Australian Government](https://www.education.gov.au/international-education-engagement/priority-partner-countries/china-resources) including:

* 2024: [Approvals processes for Chinese-Foreign Joint Institutions and Joint Programs](https://www.education.gov.au/international-education-engagement/resources/approvals-processes-chineseforeign-joint-institutions-and-joint-programs) (originally published in 2015; updated October 2024)
* 2023: [Hainan issues details on independently run foreign higher education institutions](https://webarchive.nla.gov.au/awa/20231218070810/https%3A/www.education.gov.au/international-education-engagement/resources/hainan-issues-details-independently-run-foreign-higher-education-institutions)

#### Enquiries

For enquiries, please contact the Education and Research Section of the Australian Embassy in Beijing.

#### Key terms

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| English translation | Chinese term |
| Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools | 《中华人民共和国中外合作办学条例》 |
| Information Platform for the Supervision of Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools | 中外合作办学监管工作信息平台 |

### ATTACHMENT A

### Active Australia-China Joint Programs, as of May 2025

Note: Projects that have expired within the past 18 months are considered ‘active’ for the purpose of this Update as they may be undergoing renewal or reactivation.

##### Table 1: Active Australian CFCRS Joint Institutes by Field of Study and Year of Approval, Higher Vocational Level

| **Joint institute**  | **Australian partner/s**  | **Chinese partner**  | **Year of approval**  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Sino-Australian Technical and Further Education Institute of Ningbo City College of Vocational Technology  | Western Sydney Institute of TAFE (NSW TAFE), Sydney, NSW  | Ningbo City College of Vocational Technology, Ningbo, Zhejiang Province   | 2011  |
| Fuzhou Melbourne Polytechnic  | Melbourne Polytechnic, Melbourne, VIC  | Minjiang University, Fuzhou, Fujian Province  | 2017  |
| Sino-Australian International Hotel Management School of Tourism College of Zhejiang  | William Angliss Institute of TAFE, Melbourne, VIC  | Zhejiang Tourism College, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province  | 2018  |

Source: Compiled by Australian Government Department of Education, Education and Research Section, Australian Embassy Beijing from the Chinese Ministry of Education’s website,[中华 人民共和国教育部 中外合作办学监管工作信息平台](https://jsj.moe.gov.cn/), [Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China Information Platform for the Supervision of China-Foreign Jointly-Run Schools], information as of 13 May 2025.

##### Table 2: Active Australian CFCRS Joint Institutes by Field of Study and Year of Approval, Bachelor Level and Above

| **Joint institute**  | **Australian partner/s**  | **Chinese partner**  | **Year of approval**  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| SILC Business School, Shanghai University  | University of Technology, Sydney, Sydney, NSW   | Shanghai University, Shanghai  | 1994  |
| Asia-Australia Business College of Liaoning University   | Victoria University, Melbourne, VIC  | Liaoning University, Shenyang, Liaoning Province  | 2000  |
| Southeast University-Monash University Joint Graduate School (Suzhou)  | Monash University, Melbourne, VIC  | Southeast University, Suzhou, Jiangsu Province   | 2012  |
| Central China Normal University Wollongong Joint Institute   | University of Wollongong, Wollongong, NSW  | Central China Normal University, Wuhan, Hubei Province  | 2016   |
| Westa College, Southwest University  | University of Western Australia, Perth, WA University of Tasmania, Hobart, TAS  | Southwest University  | 2016  |
| Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology University of South Australia An De College   | University of South Australia, Adelaide, SA  | Xi’an University of Architecture and Technology, Xi’an, Shaanxi Province  | 2017  |
| FedUni Information Engineering Institute, Hebei University of Science and Technology  | Federation University, Ballarat, VIC  | Hebei University of Science and Technology, Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province  | 2019  |
| SDU-ANU Joint Science College, Shandong University  | Australian National University, Canberra, ACT  | Shandong University, Weihai, Shandong Province  | 2019  |
| Swinburne College of Shandong University of Science and Technology  | Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, VIC  | Shandong University of Science and Technology, Jinan, Shandong Province  | 2020  |
| Sydney Smart Technology College, Northeastern University  | University of Technology, Sydney, Sydney, NSW  | Northeastern University, Qinhuangdao Economic and Technological Development Zone, Hebei Province   | 2020  |
| International Engineering College of Xi'an University of Technology  | James Cook University, Townsville, QLD  | Xi’an University of Science and Technology, Xi’an, Shaanxi Province  | 2020  |
| Haide College, Ocean University of China   | University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SA  | Ocean University of China, Qingdao, Shandong Province  | 2020  |
| Griffith Digital Intelligence School, Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics  | Griffith University, Gold Coast, QLD   | Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics, Nanchang, Jiangxi Province  | 2025  |
| Nanjing Normal University Macquarie University Joint Institute  | Macquarie University, Sydney, NSW  | Nanjing Normal University  | 2025  |

Source: Compiled by Australian Government Department of Education, Education and Research Section, Australian Embassy Beijing from the Chinese Ministry of Education’s website,[中华 人民共和国教育部 中外合作办学监管工作信息平台](https://jsj.moe.gov.cn/), [Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China Information Platform for the Supervision of China-Foreign Jointly-Run Schools], information as of 13 May 2025.

### ATTACHMENT B

### Australia-China Joint Program and Joint Institute Approvals by Year, 1994–2025

##### Chart 1: Australia-China CFCRS Joint Program and Institute approvals (bachelor degree level and above), 1994-2025

Source: Compiled by Australian Government Department of Education, Education and Research Section, Australian Embassy Beijing from the Chinese Ministry of Education’s website,[中华 人民共和国教育部 中外合作办学监管工作信息平台](https://jsj.moe.gov.cn/), [Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China Information Platform for the Supervision of China-Foreign Jointly-Run Schools], information as of 13 May 2025.

##### Chart 2: Australia-China CFCRS Joint Program and Institute approvals (higher vocational level), 1994-2025

Source: Compiled by Australian Government Department of Education, Education and Research Section, Australian Embassy Beijing from the Chinese Ministry of Education’s website,[中华 人民共和国教育部 中外合作办学监管工作信息平台](https://jsj.moe.gov.cn/), [Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China Information Platform for the Supervision of China-Foreign Jointly-Run Schools], information as of 13 May 2025.

1. The CPC Central Committee & The State Council. (2025, January 19). [中共中央 国务院印发《教育强国建设规划纲要2024－2035年](https://www.gov.cn/zhengce/202501/content_6999913.htm) [The CPC Central Committee and the State Council issued the Outline for Building a Powerful Nation in Education (2024–2035)]. The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China; and MoE. 教育部 (2025, 16 May) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)