



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

(Information as at 17 June 2025)

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.
- CFRCS 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).

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](#), [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

Institute/Program	Location	Australian partner	Chinese partner	Name of joint institute/program offered	Intake/year
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, [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 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.

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》 [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)

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, [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](#) including:

- 2024: [Approvals processes for Chinese-Foreign Joint Institutes and Joint Programs](#) (originally published in 2015; updated October 2024)
- 2023: [Hainan issues details on independently run foreign higher education institutions](#)

Enquiries

For enquiries, please contact the [Education and Research Section](#) of the Australian Embassy in Beijing.

Key terms

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

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 CF CRS 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](#), [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 CF CRS 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

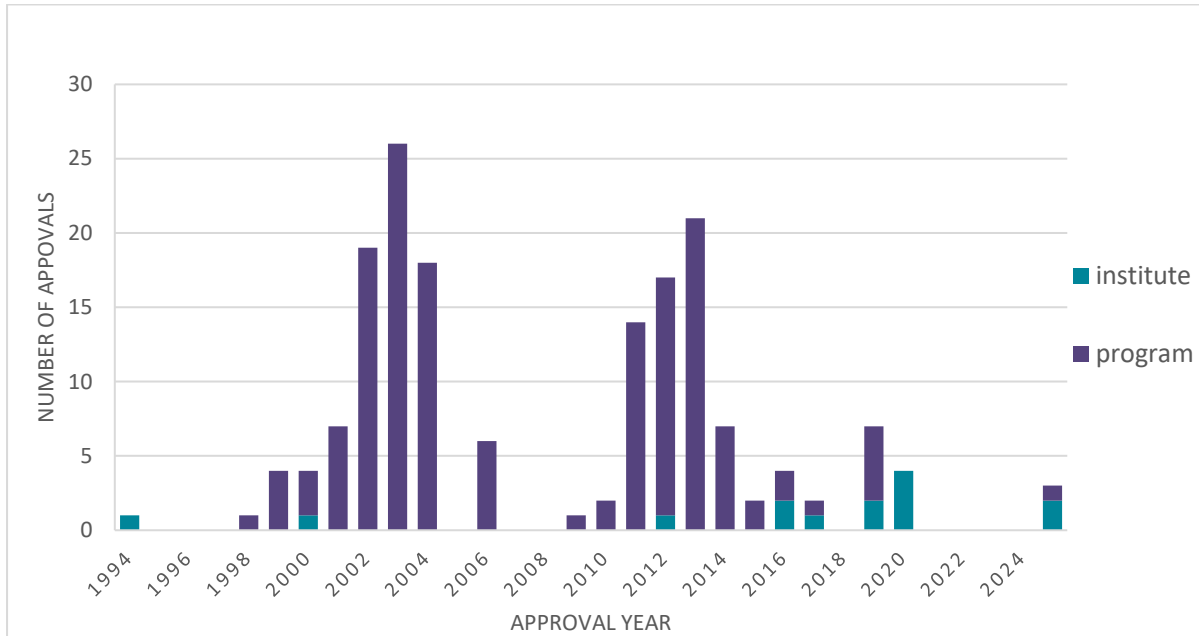
Joint institute	Australian partner/s	Chinese partner	Year of approval
Swinburne College of Shandong University of Science and Technology	Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, VIC	Shandong University of Science and Technology, Jinan, Shandong Province	2020
Sydney Smart Technology College, Northeastern 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](#), [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.



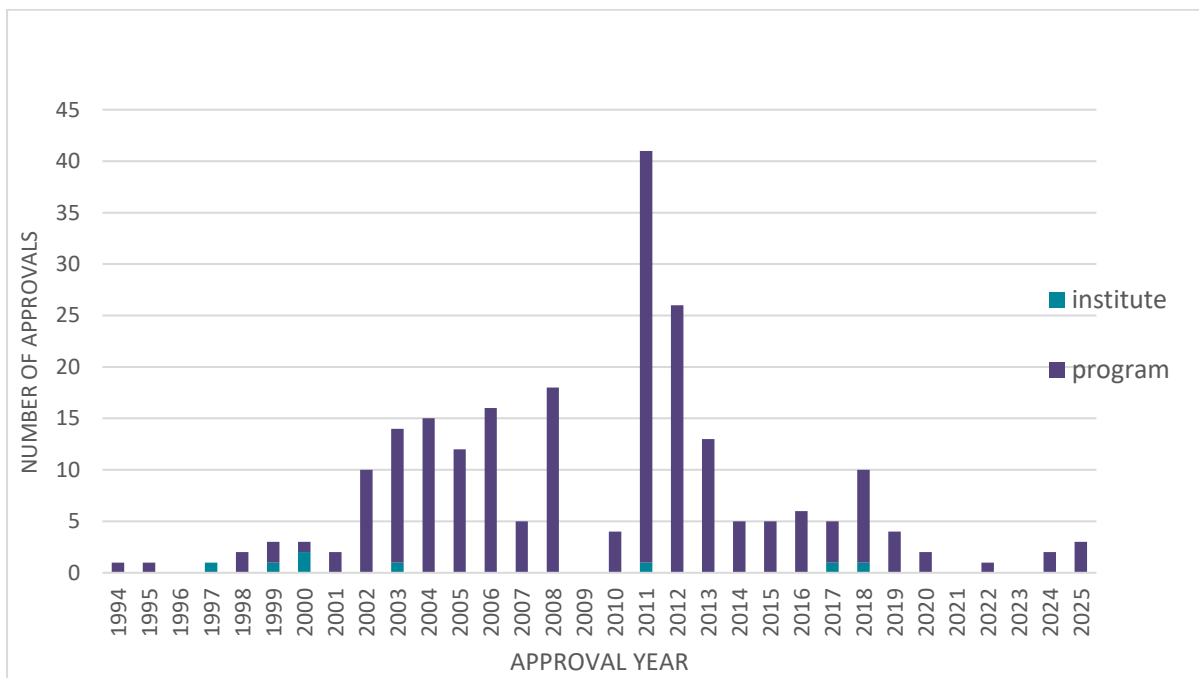
Australia-China Joint Program and Joint Institute Approvals by Year, 1994–2025

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](#), [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](#), [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.