



University-level transnational education (TNE) approvals in China, May 2026

Information as at 3 June 2026

China's Ministry of Education (MoE) published the latest university-level approvals under the Chinese-Foreign Cooperation in Running Schools (CFCRS) initiative on 25 May 2026. Across all foreign partners, a total of **86 Joint Institutes** and **133 Joint Programs** were approved in the May 2026 round. This represents a near doubling of new arrangements when compared with May 2025 when 45 institutes and 69 programs were approved.

New China-Australia approvals, May 2026

Australian universities received approval for **three** Joint Institutes and **eight** Joint Programs in the May 2026 round. By comparison, in May 2025, Australia received approval for two institutes and one program. Following the May 2026 round, there are now **22** active Australia-China Joint Institutes and **101** active Australia China Joint Programs.

Table 1: China–Australia Joint arrangements at university level, newly approved in May 2026

Institute/ Program	Location	Australian partner	Chinese partner	Name of joint institute/program	Intake per year	
					In-Quota	Out-of-Quota
Institute	Jiangsu	Deakin University	Jiangsu University	Jiangsu University Deakin University Joint Institute	300	N/a
Institute	Hainan	University of Technology, Sydney	Northeast Forestry University	Sydney College, Northeast Forestry University	285	75
Institute	Jiangxi	James Cook University	Jiangxi University of Science and Technology	Sino-Australia Smart Manufacture College	525	85
Program	Zhejiang	Australian National University	Zhejiang University	Master of Digital Transformation and Entrepreneurship	N/a	100
Program	Hubei	Monash University	Wuhan University of Technology	Bachelor of Materials Engineering (Honours)	150	N/a
Program	Hubei	Curtin University	China University of Geosciences, Wuhan	Bachelor of Computing (Computer Science)	100	N/a
Program	Hubei	University of Wollongong	Wuhan University of Technology	Bachelor of Business in Business Analytics	150	N/a
Program	Hubei	University of Wollongong	Wuhan University of Technology	Master of Business Analytics	N/a	150
Program	Hunan	Monash University	Central South University	Bachelor of Electrical and Computer Systems Engineering (Honours)	60	N/a
Program	Liaoning	Southern Cross University	Dalian University	Bachelor of Technology (Mechanical Engineering)	120	N/a
Program	Liaoning	Southern Cross University	Dalian University	Bachelor of Information Technology (Artificial Intelligence)	120	N/a

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 3 June 2026.

Key takeaways from May 2026 round

Different delivery models

Following reforms to the CFCRS, we are seeing different delivery modes across approved TNE arrangements. Half of the newly approved Australia-China joint programs are 4+0 programs (which means that students have the option to complete their entire program onshore in China), while four newly approved Australia-China joint programs require students to spend a portion of the program studying onshore in Australia (i.e. include a mandatory overseas study component).

In addition, the delivery mode of some established CFCRS arrangements were amended, for example:

- **Haide College (Ocean University of China and Adelaide University)**, approved in 2020, revised its six undergraduate programs from ‘no overseas study required’, 4+0 model to include a mandatory one-year study-in-Australia component.

On the other hand, one program programs moved toward allowing students to complete their entire degree in China, giving them greater flexibility, for example:

- the **Bachelor of Business program between Southern Cross University and Dalian University** shifted from no explicit statement to a clear indication that students have the option to complete the full program onshore in China and that no overseas study component is required.

These changes suggest the MoE is not favouring a single model but instead granting institutions greater autonomy to adopt context-appropriate delivery modes.

Strong concentration in strategic disciplines

Almost 40–45% of newly approved Australia-China CFCRS arrangements are in the field of digital and information technology, around 35% are in advanced manufacturing and engineering, and approximately 25% are in environmental sustainability and ecology.

Quantitatively, nearly 40–45% of the newly approved Australian project disciplines are related to digital and information technologies, around 35% focus on advanced manufacturing and engineering, and approximately 25% are linked to environmental sustainability and ecology. This distribution shows a strong concentration—almost 80%—in digitally-enabled industrial transformation fields, highlighting a clear prioritisation of fields that align with China’s economic development priorities.

Shift toward more comprehensive partnerships

Two of three approved Australia-China Joint Institutes—Sydney College (Northeast Forestry University) and Sino-Australia Smart Manufacture College (Jiangxi University of Science and Technology)—offer full academic pathways, with undergraduate, masters and doctoral programs all available for in-quota students. Both of these new Joint Institutes also offer foreign master’s and doctoral programs for out-of-quota students.

This comprehensive, ‘full-portfolio’ model represents the most complete configuration currently possible in university level CFCRS and reflects the MoE’s emphasis on and preference for deep, institutional-level collaboration rather than standalone programs.

Hainan as an international education hub

One of the newly approved Australian institutes, **Sydney College (Northeast Forestry University)**, is operated in Hainan Province despite its Chinese partner being based in Harbin, Heilongjiang.



This reflects a broader MoE national strategy: positioning Hainan as a hub for international education, particularly in TNE. Given the limited number and capacity of local universities in Hainan, importing high-quality domestic and international educational resources has become standard practice. In the first half of 2026 alone, Hainan approved three institutes and six programs with international partners. Only one of these institutes involved a partnership with a locally-based Hainan institution.

Concentration among leading Australian partner universities

As at May 2026, the most active Australian university-level CFCRS partner is the University of Wollongong (1 institute, 9 programs), followed by Southern Cross University (1 institute, 8 programs) and Monash University (1 institute, 6 programs). If we count joint institutes only—the University of Technology, Sydney has the largest number of joint institutes (3), followed by Adelaide University and James Cook University (2 each).

Australian universities with a strong focus on teaching tend to have the highest number of CFCRS arrangements and have previously had their enrolment quotas expanded—a sign that the MoE considers these arrangements to be successful.

New approvals with all countries, May 2026

In the May 2026 round, a total of **86 joint institutes** and **133 joint programs** were approved. The **United Kingdom** received the highest number of approvals, with 16 institutes (accounting for nearly 19% of all new institutes) and 33 programs (approximately 25% of total new programs). This was followed by Italy, Russia, the United States, and France. **Australia ranked ninth** overall in terms of total approvals.

Table 2: China–Foreign joint arrangements at university-level by partner country/region, new approvals in May 2026 (by total number of approvals)

Rank	Partner country/region	Joint institute	Joint program	Total	% of all approvals
1	United Kingdom	16	33	49	22%
2	Italy	8	9	17	8%
3	Russia	10	6	16	7%
4	United States	5	10	15	7%
5	France	5	8	13	6%
6	New Zealand	7	6	13	6%
7	Germany	7	5	12	5%
8	Hungary	3	9	12	5%
9	Australia	3	8	11	5%
10	South Korea	4	6	10	5%
11	Canada	2	7	9	4%
12	Belarus	3	4	7	3%
13	Malaysia	1	4	5	2%
14	Hong Kong	1	2	3	1%

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 3 June 2026.

At the provincial level, approvals were primarily concentrated in **Shandong and Hubei**, (accounting for approximately 12% and 10% of the total, respectively) followed by **Beijing, Jiangsu, and Sichuan**. In terms of total overall active CFCRS arrangements, the leading provinces are **Jiangsu, Shandong, Henan, Beijing, and Zhejiang**. These provinces have remained consistent hubs of TNE activity.

Inner Mongolia approved its first-ever joint institute this year, in partnership with a Russian institution, focusing on modern agriculture. **Guizhou and Jiangxi** have shown strong growth momentum in recent years. **Jiangxi now hosts six joint institutes, all of which were approved in 2025 and 2026** (including two with Australian partners). Shanxi has also demonstrated an upward trend, with two programs approved in the first half of 2026; it now hosts a total of five programs, three of which were approved within the past two years.

Table 3: China–Foreign Joint Arrangements at University Level by province, New Approvals in May 2026 (Ranked by Total Number of Approvals)

Rank	Province	Joint institute	Joint program	Total	% of all approvals
1	Shandong	10	17	27	12%
2	Hubei	7	14	21	10%
3	Beijing	3	13	16	7%
4	Jiangsu	7	8	15	7%
5	Sichuan	7	7	14	6%
6	Guangdong	6	6	12	5%
7	Henan	6	6	12	5%
8	Hainan	3	6	9	4%
9	Jiangxi	3	6	9	4%
10	Liaoning	4	5	9	4%
11	Fujian	3	5	8	4%
12	Heilongjiang	5	3	8	4%
13	Jilin	1	6	7	3%
14	Shaanxi	4	3	7	3%
15	Zhejiang	4	3	7	3%
16	Chongqing	2	4	6	3%
17	Guangxi	2	3	5	2%
18	Hebei	4	1	5	2%
19	Hunan	1	4	5	2%
20	Guizhou	2	2	4	2%
21	Yunnan	N/a	4	4	2%
22	Anhui	N/a	2	2	1%
23	Shanghai	1	1	2	1%
24	Shanxi	N/a	2	2	1%
25	Tianjin	N/a	2	2	1%
26	Inner Mongolia	1	N/a	1	0%

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 3 June 2026.

Data note

May 2026 approvals at the university-level can be found on 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].

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:

- 2026: [How TNE programs are evaluated, verified and accredited in China](#)
- 2025: [Transnational education reform in China, 2025](#)
- 2025: [May 2025 China-Australia Joint Institute and Joint Program Approvals](#)
- 2024: [Approvals processes for Chinese-Foreign Joint Institutions 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