

31 July 2020

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The Consulate General of the P.R. China in Manchester,
153 Barlow Moor Road,
West Didsbury,
Manchester, M20 2YA

Dear Consul General ██████████,

Further to the individual discussions we have recently had with you and your colleagues at the Chinese Consulate General Manchester regarding flight capacity for students arriving into Manchester Airport to commence their studies this Autumn, we write to seek your support for a proposal we are collectively developing with Hainan Airlines.

As a group of universities we place great value on the contribution Chinese students bring to our campuses and to the life of the cities in which they are hosted. In the context of Covid-19, our priority is that their experience whilst studying in the UK is both fulfilling and safe and we have greatly appreciated your personal support and guidance over the past months in ensuring Chinese students in the north of England are well supported during their studies. Looking ahead to the start of the 20/21 academic year, we are all looking forward to welcoming a new cohort of students to our campuses this Autumn. In planning for the start of the new academic year, appropriate changes have been made to the curriculum and to the physical environment to ensure Chinese students will be safe whilst studying at our universities. Our priority moving forward is now to ensure students can safely reach their chosen university to commence their studies.

As a group of universities, we are currently in discussion with Hainan airlines to run a series of special charter flights exclusively for our students during September and October. Working in partnership with Hainan Airlines, who we understand are currently running a series of special repatriation flights on behalf of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we would like offer students the opportunity to fly from a small number of destinations in China directly to Manchester. The exclusive nature of the flights would not only ensure that students are able to secure tickets at a reasonable cost but also allow a dedicated arrival process at Manchester Airport, whereby students can be collected by their destination university and taken directly to their chosen accommodation on arrival.

We understand from Hainan Airlines that permission is needed from the Chinese Government to run charter flights to the UK. Hainan Airlines has already been in contact with the CAAC and has confirmed that such exclusive student charters to the UK would fall under the current "back to work scheme " and would need permission from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We would greatly appreciate any support the Consul General can provide in securing permission to run these additional flights during the Autumn Semester.

Yours sincerely,

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Professor Dame Nancy Rothwell,
President and Vice-Chancellor, The University of Manchester



Professor Stuart Corbridge,
Vice-Chancellor, Durham University



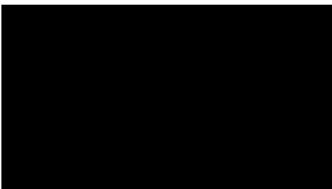
Sir Alan Langlands,
Vice-Chancellor, University of Leeds



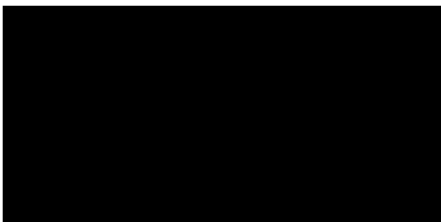
Professor Dame Janet Beer,
Vice-Chancellor, University of Liverpool



Professor Chris Day,
Vice-Chancellor and President, Newcastle University



Professor Koen Lamberts,
President and Vice-Chancellor, The University of Sheffield



Professor Charlie Jeffery,
Vice-Chancellor and President, University of York