

PhD studentship (Full-time)



Institution	Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China
Department	Department of Health and Environmental Sciences
Supervisors	Principle supervisor: Professor Johannes M H Knops (XJTLU, Health and Environmental Sciences) Co-supervisor: Professor Kate Parr (UoL, School of Environmental Sciences)
Application Deadline	Open until the positions are filled
Funding Availability	Two Funded PhD project (world-wide students)
Project Title	Community / ecosystem ecological impacts of coexisting herbivores in Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau alpine meadows
Contact	Please email Johannes.Knops@xjtlu.edu.cn (XJTLU principal supervisor's email address) with a subject line of the PhD project title

Requirements:

The candidates should have a first class or upper second class honours degree, or a master's degree (or equivalent qualification), in Ecology or a related field. Evidence of good spoken and written English is essential, and a minimum IELTS score of 6.5, or equivalent is required, if the first language is not English and the undergraduate and master's degree were not obtained at a University where English was the instruction language. Field work will be during the summer months in Qinghai Province, China at 3,500 to 4,500 m elevation. Both positions are open to all qualified candidates irrespective of nationality.

Degree:

The student will be awarded a PhD degree from the University of Liverpool (UK) upon successful completion of the program.

Funding:

Both PhD studentships are available for three years subject to satisfactory progress by the student. The award covers tuition fees for three years (currently equivalent to RMB 80,000 per annum) and provides a monthly stipend of RMB 5,000 as a contribution to living expenses. It also provides up to RMB 16,500 to allow participation at international conferences during the period of the award. It is a condition of the award that holders of XJTLU PhD scholarships carry out 300-500 hours of teaching assistance work per year. The scholarship holder is expected to carry out the major part of his or her research at XJTLU in Suzhou, China. However, he or she is eligible for a research study visit to the University of Liverpool of up to three months, if this is required by the project.

Project Description:

One of the most diverse grasslands on Earth are Tibetan alpine meadows, located on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau. These meadows average 30 to 40 plant species per 0.25 square meter. In a world where ecosystems are increasingly modified and fragmented, it is critically important to understand why ecosystems differ in diversity and how species coexist. These alpine grasslands are used for intense livestock grazing by sheep, yaks and horses. In addition, a diverse array of herbivores coexists with livestock, common are small mammals such as zokors, pikas, marmots, and insects, such as caterpillars, and grasshoppers.

Both PhD positions will be part of a collaborative project to examine how herbivores and plant diversity interact. The project will test the central hypothesis that multiple consumers, specifically herbivore communities that differ in diet and vary from generalist to specialist, are essential to the maintenance of high diversity, high net primary productivity, fast nutrient cycling, and grazing sustainability. Specific PhD projects will be developed depending on each students' expertise and interest.

For more information about doctoral scholarship and PhD programme at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (XJTLU): Please visit

<http://www.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/study-with-us/admissions/entry-requirements>

<http://www.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/admissions/phd/feescholarships.html>

How to Apply:

Interested applicants are advised to email Johannes.Knops@xjtlu.edu.cn the following documents for initial review and assessment (please put the project title in the subject line).

- CV
- Two reference letters with company/university letterhead
- Personal statement outlining your interest in the position
- Proof of English language proficiency (an IELTS score of 6.5 or above)
- Verified school transcripts in both Chinese and English (for international students, only the English version is required)
- Verified certificates of education qualifications in both Chinese and English (for international students, only the English version is required)

Informal enquiries may be addressed to Professor Johannes Knops (Johannes.Knops@xjtlu.edu.cn), whose personal profile is linked below, <http://www.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/faculty/.....>