

PhD studentship (Full-time)

Institution	Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China
Department	Department of Health and Environmental Sciences
Supervisors	Principle supervisor: Dr Zheng Feei Ma (XJTLU, Department of Health and Environmental Sciences) Co-supervisor: Professor Elmer Villanueva (XJTLU, Department of Health and Environmental Sciences) Co-supervisor: Dr Andrew Sharp (UoL, Institute of Translational Medicine)
Application Deadline	Open until the position is filled
Funding Availability	Funded PhD project (world-wide students)
Project Title	Iodine Status and Breast Milk Iodine Concentration in Chinese Lactating Women (中国西部哺乳妇女碘状况和母乳碘含量的评估)
Subject Areas	Human Nutrition Public Health Biological Sciences
Contact	Please email Zhengfee.Ma@xjtlu.edu.cn (XJTLU principal supervisor's email address) with a subject line of the PhD project title

Requirements:

The candidate should have a first class or upper second class honours degree, or a master's degree (or equivalent qualification), in Human Nutrition, Public Health or a related field. Prior laboratory experience (depending upon individual circumstances) is preferred but not required. Evidence of good spoken and written English is essential. The candidate should have an IELTS score of 6.5 or above, if the first language is not English. Field work will be conducted in the Western Part of China. This position is 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:

The PhD studentship is 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 5,000 RMB 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:

Iodine deficiency is one of the most common micronutrient deficiencies worldwide. It affects 30% of the world's population. However, in China, both the iodine deficiency and excess coexist. There is a lack of data on breast milk iodine concentration (BMIC) in China and also internationally. Human mammary glands have the ability to concentrate iodine, thus it is possible that infants fed with breast milk may have good iodine status regardless of the maternal iodine status. However, there are some studies that have reported the discrepancy between BMIC and iodine status in women. Also, currently there are no acceptable cut-offs to determine the iodine sufficiency in BMIC. Therefore, the aim of the project is to determine iodine status of pregnant women by collecting multiple breast milk and urine samples over a certain period of time. The PhD position will be part of a collaborative project to examine the iodine status and BMIC of pregnant women living in the Western Part of China. A specific PhD project will be developed depending on the student's 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/admissions/phd/entry-requirements.html>

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

How to Apply:

Interested applicants are advised to email Zhengfee.Ma@xjtlu.edu.cn (XJTLU principal supervisor's email address) 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 Dr. Zheng Feei Ma (Zhengfee.Ma@xjtlu.edu.cn), whose personal profile is linked below,

<https://www.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/departments/academic-departments/health-and-environmental-sciences/staff/zheng-fei-ma>