

Going Global Partnerships

UK-Malaysia-Jiangsu (China) Higher Education Forum 2025

A Strategic Alliance for Global Excellence

19 February 2025

Sunway University

Context

The UK and Malaysia have long-standing higher education (HE) relationships, strengthened by historical ties, shared interests and goals. In a 2023 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the two countries renewed their commitment to expanding collaborative efforts in higher education, research and innovation.

Since 2024, Malaysia and China have discussed strategic initiatives to strengthen HE cooperation while celebrating the 50th anniversary of Malaysia-China diplomatic relations.

The British Council has always recognised the vital role that HE plays in building robust, collaborative relationships between nations. To further strengthen knowledge sharing, cultural exchange, mobility and research excellence between our nations, the British Council has established the UK-Malaysia University Consortium and the UK-Jiangsu University Consortium, working in collaboration with local and provincial government departments. Against the backdrop of greater educational globalisation and the need to find innovative solutions to the challenges this brings, we are now hosting a UK-Malaysia-Jiangsu (China) Higher Education Forum in 2025 with the theme of **A Strategic Alliance for Global Excellence**.

This Forum will

- bring together the UK-Malaysia University Consortium and the UK-Jiangsu University Consortium – both set up by the British Council
- build on existing diplomatic and partnership frameworks to create deeper, more responsive and adaptable partnerships between the UK, Malaysia and Jiangsu (China), enabling them to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world
- set the stage for sustainable HE partnerships to drive innovation and excellence in the region and beyond

The importance of multilateral collaboration

With increasingly complex global challenges ahead, the need for strong, multilateral partnerships in higher education is now urgent. Stronger collaboration between the UK, Malaysia and Jiangsu (China) will better achieve shared goals of academic excellence, technological innovation and global sustainability.

The UK-Malaysia-Jiangsu (China) Education Forum 2025 will be a catalyst for stronger partnerships in education, research, talent development and economic growth. It will empower partners to:

- share knowledge
- leverage collective strengths
- create new opportunities for students, academics and institutions

ASEAN inclusion

Malaysia's leadership as the Chair of ASEAN in 2025 amplifies the importance of strategic collaboration across the region. The UK has been a Dialogue Partner to ASEAN since 2021. China continues to be a valuable partner in ASEAN's wider regional engagement, with its increasingly integrated approach to higher education, creating opportunities for multilateral cooperation. The convergence of the strategic roles and links between all three countries and the broader region.

Objectives

The UK-Malaysia-Jiangsu (China) Higher Education Forum 2025 brings together leaders of industry, academia and government to debate, to explore and to deliver actionable outcomes for higher education collaborations against the following:

- 1. Barriers and solutions to trilateral and multilateral partnerships in higher education:**
 - Identify the main drivers and challenges for UK-Malaysia-Jiangsu (China) collaborations
 - Find pathways to overcome barriers to partnership, innovation, and knowledge exchange
- 2. Innovative opportunities for collaborations between the UK, Malaysia and Jiangsu (China):**
 - Highlight and explore successful models of collaboration in education and research
 - Identify opportunities for greater cooperation across academic, government and industrial sectors
- 3. Models of best practice and innovation for funding and sustainability in consortia partnerships**
 - Understand how funding models can adapt to support long-term and sustainable collaborations in higher education and research among diverse partners
- 4. Priority areas of collaboration:**
 - *Student outcomes:* explore strategies to enhance outward mobility, entrepreneurial skills and student employability across the UK, Malaysia and Jiangsu (China)
 - *Research innovation and Centres of Excellence:* discuss strategies for joint research, establishing Centres of Excellence and fostering global innovation
 - *Transnational education (TNE) and other joint models of collaboration:* identify key trends and innovations in TNE, dual degrees and other models that align with the needs
- 5. Strategic framework for collaboration:**
 - Create a shared vision for future partnerships
 - Outline actionable commitments
 - Create a framework for collaboration to drive progress in higher education, research and innovation

Programme

Date: 19 February 2025

Time: 9.00 am to 6.00 pm

Venue: Sunway University, Malaysia

Registration link: <https://forms.office.com/e/6WHH9i1eTn>

Agenda

9:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. | Registration and Welcome Coffee

- Registration desk open for attendees
 - Coffee and light refreshments available
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9:30 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. | Welcome, Context and Statement of Intent

- Jazreel Goh MBE, Director Malaysia, British Council
 - The significance of UK-Malaysia-Jiangsu (China) collaborations in higher education.
 - Agreement for collaboration through the Statement of Intent by representatives from UK-MY University Consortium and UK-Jiangsu World-Class Universities Consortium
 - Photo opportunity with Consortium leads, British Council, Dr Xiaoxiang Mao, Deputy Director, Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education, Mr. Tang Jing, Secretary for Education, Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Malaysia, Datuk Prof. Dr. Azlinda Azman, Director General of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia
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9:45 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Opening Remarks

- Datuk Prof. Dr. Azlinda Azman, Director General of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia
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10:00 a.m. – 10:20 a.m. | Opening Keynote Address

- Speaker: Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi, Provost and CEO, Heriot-Watt University, Malaysia
 - Title: *Shaping Global Excellence: Strategic Collaborations in Higher Education for Sustainable Growth*
 - Overview of the transformative role of strategic higher education partnerships in advancing global academic mobility, research, and innovation.
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10:20 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. | Networking Coffee Break

- Informal networking opportunity for delegates
 - Light refreshments
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10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. | Panel Discussion 1

Topic: *Opportunities and Barriers in Trilateral and Multilateral Partnerships in Higher Education*

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- Moderator: Jazreel Goh MBE, Director Malaysia, British Council
 - Panelists:
 - Dr Xiaoxiang Mao, Deputy Director, Jiangsu Provincial Department of Education
 - Professor Vishna Devi V Nadarajah, Chief Executive Officer and Provost Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia
 - Professor Kirk Semple, Director for International Research, Lancaster University
 - Professor Dr. Yatimah Alias, Vice Chancellor, Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA)
 - Discussion points:
 - Navigating the challenges and complexities of forming trilateral and multilateral partnerships
 - Policy and regulatory frameworks across the UK, Malaysia and Jiangsu (China)
 - How to overcome cultural, administrative, and logistical barriers to successful partnerships
 - Diversifying funding sources for international consortia
 - Best practices for managing and ensuring the longevity/sustainability of cross-border educational partnerships/collaborations
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11:30 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. | Panel Discussion 2

Topic: *Ideas on Innovative Collaborations Between the UK, Malaysia and Jiangsu (China) for strategic partnerships*

- Moderator: Prabha Sundram, Head Education, British Council
 - Panelists:
 - Professor Dr. Yvonne Lim Ai Lian, Associate Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International), Universiti Malaya
 - Professor Alan Marshall, Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor, University of Liverpool and UK chair of UK-Jiangsu Consortium
 - Professor Dr. Chai Lay Ching, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), Sunway University
 - Ms Chen Danhe, Deputy Director of Office of International Affairs, Nanjing University of Science and Technology
 - Professor Raymond Lee, Associate Dean (Global Engagement), University of Portsmouth
 - Discussion points:
 - Sharing best practices and soliciting ideas for collaborations
 - Creating tailored educational partnerships for mutual benefit
 - Building cross-regional academic programmes and pathways
 - International research initiatives and their role in sustainable development goals
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12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. | Lunch Break and Networking

1:30 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. | Moving to Breakout Rooms

1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. | Breakout Session 1: Student Outcomes

Topic: *Enhancing Student Outcomes through Mobility and Entrepreneurship*

- Facilitator: Mr Rui Li, Director Southwest China, British Council
- Presenter: Dr Julia Wang Director of International Relations, Liverpool John Moores University and Chair of the UK Malaysia University Consortium

Key discussion points:

- Expanding opportunities for student exchange, joint degrees, and internship programmes
- Entrepreneurial mindset and skill-building through cross-cultural experiences
- Developing a tri-lateral summer school model

1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. | Breakout Session 2: Research Innovation

Topic: *Building Centres of Excellence and Advancing Research Collaboration*

- Facilitator: Professor Ir Dr Mohd Shahir Liew, Vice Provost of Research and Knowledge Exchange, University of Nottingham Malaysia
- Presenter: Associate Professor Dr Anthony Ho Siong Hock, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research & Enterprise, Taylors University

Key discussion points:

- Identifying high-impact research areas for collaboration
- Soliciting proposals for a trilateral research collaboration initiative
- Establishing multi-partner research centres focused on innovation and sustainability
- Leveraging industry partnerships to accelerate translational research and innovation

1:45 p.m. – 2:45 p.m. | Breakout Session 3: TNE and Joint Models of Collaboration for tri and multilateral partnerships

Topic: *Exploring Transnational Education and Joint Academic Models for Global Impact*

- Facilitator: Jazreel Goh MBE, Director Malaysia, British Council
- Presenter: Professor Dennis Wong, Regional Provost and Group CEO (East and Southeast Asia), Newcastle University

Key discussion points:

- Best practices for successful delivery of tri/multilateral TNE programmes
- Joint PhD, dual-degree, and collaborative models of higher education – opportunities and barriers
- Achieving long-term sustainability and mutual benefit in TNE initiatives

2:45 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. | Moving to Plenary Room

3:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. | Breakout summaries

Facilitator to outline (10min each)

- 3 main highlights from discussion
- 1 main action /recommendation to take forward

3:30 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. | Closing Keynote

Topic: *A vision for the future of higher education collaborations in Asia*

Speaker: Professor Andy Schofield, Vice-Chancellor, Lancaster University

3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. | Closing Remarks

- Speaker: Jazreel Goh MBE, Director Malaysia, British Council
 - Summary of the day's discussions
 - Closing

4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. | Networking Reception

- An informal setting for continued networking and building partnerships

Conclusion

The UK-Malaysia-Jiangsu (China) Higher Education Forum 2025 is a milestone in the evolution of global academic collaboration. By uniting the strengths and insights of higher education leaders, policy makers and academics from the UK, Malaysia and Jiangsu (China), the Forum will advance higher education and research, building a sustainable framework for success in years ahead. Through strategic multilateral collaboration and innovation, it will create opportunities for students, researchers, and institutions to benefit not just Malaysia, Jiangsu (China) and the UK, but the whole world.

Contact

For more information, please contact:

Prabha Sundram, Head of Education, Malaysia, British Council

Prabha.Sundram@britishcouncil.org.my