

### PhD studentship (Full-time)

Institution	Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University, China
School	School of Science
Supervisors	Principal supervisor: Dr Yaoqi Li(XJTLU) Co-supervisor: Professor Kate Parr (UoL) Co-supervisor: Professor Johannes M H Knops (XJTLU) Co-supervisor: Dr Li Li (XJTLU)
Application Deadline	Open until the position is filled
Funding Availability	Funded PhD project (world-wide students)
Project Title	Functional Diversity of Alpine Grasslands Under Grazing: From Individuals to Ecosystems
Contact	Please email Yaoqi.Li@xjtlu.edu.cn (XJTLU principal supervisor's email address) with a subject line of the PhD project title.  The principal supervisor's profile is linked here: <a href="https://connect.xjtlu.edu.cn/user/yaoqi-li">https://connect.xjtlu.edu.cn/user/yaoqi-li</a>

#### **Requirements:**

The candidate should have a first class or upper second class honours degree, or a master's degree (or equivalent qualification), in ecology, botany or a related field.

Preference will be given to candidates with the following experiences: a) fieldwork in alpine ecosystems; b) strong performance in statistics; c) a record of published peer-reviewed papers or evidence of excellent writing ability.

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. 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 99,000 per annum).

It also provides up to RMB 16,500 to allow participation at international conferences during the period of the award. 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 up to six months, if this is required by the project.

### **Project Description:**

Alpine vegetation is vulnerable to environmental change and has already shown changes in composition and phenology in response. However, there is a lack of knowledge regarding the multi-scale responses of plants to climate change on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau. Recent advances in trait diversity provide a physiological perspective to connect plant performance with ecosystem properties.

This project will combine field surveys, control experiments and data modeling to assess trait variations and their impact to biomass allocation in a changing environment across scales, examine the shift in functional diversity under disturbance, and evaluate their contribution to ecosystem productivity. Here, we will adopt trait-based approaches to investigate: a) inter- and intra-specific trait variations and their contribution to biomass allocation in changing environments, b) the response of plant communities in terms of trait diversity and phenology under grazing disturbance, and c) the link between functional diversity and ecosystem productivity.

Our objective is to promote the maintenance of plant diversity from a functional perspective under disturbance and improve management and conservation strategies for alpine ecosystems by comprehensively understanding species adaptation and interaction across scales.

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

<https://www.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/admissions/global/entry-requirements/>

<https://www.xjtlu.edu.cn/en/admissions/global/fees-and-scholarship>

### **How to Apply:**

Interested applicants are advised to email.....@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 formal reference letters
- Personal statement outlining your interest in the position

- Certificates of English language qualifications (IELTS or equivalent)
- Full academic 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)
- PDF copy of Master Degree dissertation (or an equivalent writing sample) and examiners reports available