



CHINA SCHOLARSHIP COUNCIL- YALE WORLD SCHOLARS in Public Health

Guidelines for Choosing applicants for 2020-2021

Brief overview

Yale University has a deep and long-standing relationship with China. Many leaders in China trained at Yale, and there are currently over 90 joint programs and projects between Yale and China. The China Scholarship Council-Yale World Scholars in Public Health Program is built on the China Scholarship Council (CSC) – Yale World Scholars Program in the Biological and Biomedical Sciences (BBS) that started in 2006 as the first joint project involving graduate training in biomedical sciences. Similar to the CSC-Yale BBS World Scholars Program, the goal of the Public Health program is to bring graduates from leading Public Health Universities in China to the Yale School of Public Health (YSPH) for graduate studies in order to train leaders who can contribute significantly to research in China. Following completion of Ph.D. studies at Yale and postdoctoral training, students will return to China for at least two years. Funding for the program is provided by two-year fellowships from the China Scholarship Council and by Yale. The CSC-Yale Public Health Program started in 2017 and we are currently admitting up to 10 students per year.

The primary mission of the doctoral program in Public Health is to provide scholars with the disciplinary background and skills required to contribute to the development of our understanding of better ways to measure, maintain and improve the public's health. Public health spans disciplines that use tools available in the laboratory, field research, social sciences, the public policy arena and mathematics. The core of this training includes the mastery of research tools in the specialty discipline chosen by the candidate. Students engage in a highly focused area of research reflecting scholarship at the doctoral level, but are exposed to a broad view of public health as seen in the diverse research interests of the School's faculty.

Six departments at the Yale School of Public Health offer a PhD program:

- Biostatistics
- Chronic Disease Epidemiology
- Environmental Health Sciences
- Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases
- Health Policy and Management
- Social and Behavioral Sciences

We encourage interdisciplinary research as well as the ability to conduct dissertation research abroad. Placement of PhD students is outstanding. A statistical profile including admissions data, total enrollment, time to degree, and career data is available here: <https://gsas.yale.edu/admissions/program-statistics>.

Nomination process

Nine Chinese institutions currently participate in the CSC-Yale World Scholars Program: Fudan University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Nanjing University, Peking University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Sun Yat-Sen University, Tsinghua University, University of Science and Technology of China, and Zhejiang University. The Yale Public Health Program has two separate mechanisms to recruit senior undergraduate students from these institutions.

1. The Public Health Program will coordinate with the following seven universities, **Central South University, Peking University, Fudan University, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Zhejiang University, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, and Sun Yat-Sen University**, to recruit senior undergraduate students to the following departments in YSPH: Chronic Disease Epidemiology, Environmental Health Sciences, Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases, Health Policy and Management, and Social and Behavioral Sciences.

Although we are primarily soliciting applications from senior undergraduate students associated with Schools of Public Health, we also encourage applications from students associated with other schools or departments at these seven universities, who have a strong interest in public health.

Each institution will nominate 3 students and officially convey the information **by October 30, 2020**, to Chao Liu, Deputy Director of CSC at cliu@csc.edu.cn, and to Melanie Elliot, Administrative Director of Graduate Student Affairs, Yale School of Public Health, at melanie.elliott@yale.edu.

2. The Biostatistics department at the Yale School of Public Health will work directly with the corresponding schools/departments of all nine participating universities to evaluate and identify candidates who are interested in pursuing a doctoral degree in Biostatistics.

The nominated students from the seven Universities and the top nominated Biostatistics candidates will apply to Yale *via* the process described below.

Application Process

Prior to beginning the application process, nominated students should contact Melanie Elliot (melanie.elliott@yale.edu) to request an application fee waiver. Mrs. Elliot will send them a fee waiver form, which they will include in their online application. With this form, they will NOT need to pay the application fee.

All students apply to the YSPH Program *via* the Yale Graduate School's online application, which is available at <https://gsas.yale.edu/admissions/degree-program-application-process>. In the application, students select a Department to which they wish to apply. Although the YSPH application deadline is at the beginning of December, nominees for the CSC-Yale World Scholars program should submit their applications **no later than November 19th, 2020**. Faculty from YSPH will interview applicants by Zoom starting November 30, and the November 1 deadline provides faculty with sufficient time to review application materials before the interviews.

After the interviews with the Yale faculty have been completed, YSPH will select the top nominees from the pool of applicants to recommend for admission to the Yale Graduate School. These Scholars will be the best candidates in the judgment of YSPH and will not necessarily be evenly distributed among the Chinese universities. The Dean of the Graduate School makes all final admissions decisions, which will be

communicated directly to the students. The CSC and the Chinese universities will also be notified.

The students admitted to Yale then apply for a CSC fellowship *via* an online application, available at <http://apply.csc.edu.cn>. The CSC will officially announce the selection results to relevant Chinese universities and grantees in official documents.

Recommendations for identifying nominees

Each partner school may nominate up to 3 students for the CSC-Yale World Scholars Program. We strongly encourage the Program Leaders at each partner school to distribute the CSC-Yale Program announcement to all eligible senior undergraduate students to obtain as many qualified applicants as possible. We also encourage Program Leaders to include interviews of students by a panel of faculty to help identify students who demonstrate the qualities we seek in successful applicants. Students who have an opportunity to practice are more experienced and therefore more successful during the formal Yale interview process.

PhD study emphasizes mastery of principles and applying them creatively to new situations rather than memorization of facts. This style of learning is new to most of our trainees, including students from China. We believe the most successful candidates will have demonstrated several important characteristics as undergraduates:

1. *Scientific skills*: Students should illustrate their scientific skills in the personal statement by describing independent achievement on a project. Scientific ability can also be described in a recommendation letter by the supervisor of the project. Evidence of scientific products (software, abstracts or papers published, posters presented) should be referenced or included as appendices in the application.
2. *Scholarship of the relevant scientific literature*: The personal statement or recommendation letters should illustrate how the student critically reads and understands primary literature in a given field and integrates this information into their scientific worldview and/or research.
3. *Capacity for critical thought, problem solving, and creativity*: It can be helpful for the applicant or a research supervisor to identify specific examples in which the applicant managed to analyze a specific problem and solve it.
4. *Perseverance*: The personal statement or recommendation letters should demonstrate the student's ability to work on single problem or project, drive it forward, and recognize roadblocks and setbacks and troubleshoot or adjust strategy.

Qualities in applicants that we look for in the personal statement, recommendation letters, and interviews

Transcripts and the GRE and TOEFL tests

Our application requires students to submit undergraduate transcripts and scores for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). We do not have a minimum GPA requirement or minimum test scores. Our Graduate School does, however, require a minimum score of 100 on the TOEFL in order for students to serve as teaching assistants, which our program requires. In some cases, a demonstrated proficiency in English during the interview can make up for a weaker TOEFL score.

The personal statement

The personal statement is viewed by the admissions committee as one of the most important parts of the application. The purpose of the personal statement is for the applicant to express a suitability and motivation for PhD study by describing accomplishments in the laboratory or field work that are relevant to the PhD program of interest. Students should emphasize their specific role in the research and write a thoughtful summary of what was learned from the study. This is particularly important for applicants who have participated in large multi-member team projects. Applicants are also strongly encouraged to read about the Public Health Program and include in their personal statement possible thesis topics and faculty members in whose labs they might wish to conduct research.

Letters of recommendation

Three letters of recommendation are required. The most useful letters are from individuals who have observed the applicant in a research setting and can comment on the following skills that are important for success in graduate school: scientific skills, critical thinking skills, knowledge of the relevant literature, communication skills, ability to work independently and as part of a team, motivation, determination, and creativity. *Note: Letters from influential leaders at the school or from classroom instructors do not provide as much impact in the admissions process unless they can comment specifically on the applicant's proficiency in these relevant skills.*

Interviews

Each nominated applicant will be interviewed by Zoom for 25 minutes by a committee of three Yale faculty. Most of the interview focuses on the students' research experiences and accomplishments. While the student leads this discussion, the interviewers will ask frequent questions to probe the student's knowledge of research background, methodology, key data, interpretations (including limitations of the study design), and alternative strategies. Time is reserved at the end for the student to describe their potential research interests at Yale (possible research areas or faculty mentors with whom the applicant would want to perform research), and also for addressing any questions the applicant may have. Successful applicants all demonstrate a comprehensive mastery of their research project/topic and have invested significant time in identifying relevant interests at Yale.