



# Handbook for Visiting Scholars at the Nordic Centre in Shanghai, China

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*Read before departure!*

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**The Nordic Centre building**

## Introduction

The Nordic Centre in Shanghai is a hub for academic collaborations with China within all kinds of research areas. One of our functions is to provide office spaces, seminar facilities, and various services for visiting scholars from our 26 Nordic member universities who are in China to conduct research or research-related activities, whether in the form of field work or exchanges with colleagues or other. Our facilities are located in the Nordic Centre building, pictured on page 2, on the main campus of Fudan University. [A map to this building from the campus entrance can be found here.](#)

This handbook is intended for our visiting scholars who come here for varying durations, with practical information on staying in China, procedures at the Nordic Centre, what you can expect from the Nordic Centre in terms of facilities and assistance, and more. Please contact us if you have any questions about the information in this handbook or about being a visiting scholar at the Nordic Centre.

Do note that many of the researchers who come here are not specialized in Chinese affairs, and some have never visited the country before. It is a misconception we sometimes come across that we are only a place for “China scholars.” While we certainly receive scholars specialized in a number of China-specific topics, we are a platform for all kinds of scholars coming to work in China or collaborate with colleagues here, no matter what the subject matter of the research is.

## Booking procedure

To book an office space as a visiting scholar at Nordic Centre, please write an email to programme manager Magnus Jorem, at [magnus@nordiccentre.net](mailto:magnus@nordiccentre.net) specifying your institutional affiliation, research area, and the duration of your intended stay. If you have not been to the Nordic Centre before, we recommend reading this handbook before sending an email.



All kinds of researchers from Nordic Centre member institutions are eligible as visiting scholars. In exceptional cases, we also accept master’s degree students writing their thesis, but only if there are several more spaces available.

We have eight office spaces in total, and most of the time, not all of them are filled up. Durations vary from weeks to months, and there is no “standard” amount of time you need to spend here as a visiting scholar.

The fee for this office space and the other services we provide is **100 euros a month**, which we invoice at the end of your stay.<sup>1</sup> If you come here under a scholarship it should cover this fee; if you come here on our research platform funding (see p. 9) the fee will be waived.

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<sup>1</sup> If your stay is very short, e.g. only a few days, we can waive this fee.

## Facilities, hours, and equipment

All our visiting scholars get an office space with a computer and access to a printer. We have two separate rooms for visiting scholars (room 203 and 209 on the Nordic Centre's second floor), each with four work spaces.

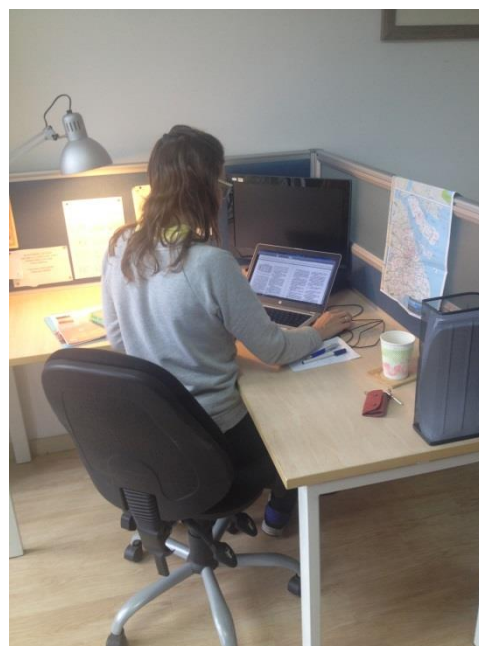
***Our office hours are 9 AM to 5 PM, Monday to Friday.*** We often stay longer, but as a general rule, you must leave the office by 5, or risk being locked inside the building! We do not give out keys to the building to visiting scholars or others. If you wish to stay late on a given day, check with our staff whether we are staying late, but don't assume it. Please note that the Nordic Centre is closed and thus **inaccessible in the month of August.**

In the **Nordic Centre library**, you will find books in the five Nordic languages, Chinese, and English, mostly academic books but also some fiction.

You will also have access to the **Fudan University library**, a short walk from the Nordic Centre, with its collection of works in a comprehensive range of disciplines. To access it, ask one of our staff, and we will help you fill out the appropriate form. In addition, you can access **Fudan Library's online database** at the Nordic Centre.

If you wish to **host a seminar** in our venues during your stay, this comes at a fee dependent on number of participants, services required, and duration. We have a number of different rooms for various purposes, some suited for roundtable discussions, some for more classroomy settings, some for formal meetings. Write to [magnus@nordiccentre.net](mailto:magnus@nordiccentre.net) to learn more.

Our **Multi-Function Room** (room 208) on the second floor is accessible to everyone 9 AM to 5 PM, and is an informal setting for many kinds of activities – from group work during seminars to study spaces for students to social gatherings and meetings. While generally open to all, it can be booked for free for special occasions by contacting our staff at least one week in advance.



## Social interactions



Since many visiting scholars do not have a network at Fudan already, we like to offer a welcoming environment in an informal fashion. All visiting scholars are invited to our social events, e.g. Nordic movie nights, cultural events, and Friday bars for students. We take new arrivals out for a lunch with the whole office, and on an irregular basis also go to lunch with current visiting scholars. Due to our many visits from abroad, courses, and seminars, we don't have a "regular coffee break" as

is the case in many Nordic countries (no day here is the same), but encourage informal social gatherings from time to time with coffee, tea, and snacks, so that everyone gets to know each other. Sometimes, we also conduct interviews with our visiting scholars for the Nordic Centre newsletter, increasing the visibility of their research to a Nordic and Chinese audience.

Please note: We host many courses and seminars at the Nordic Centre, some of which are of interest to our visiting scholars. As Nordic Centre staff we are open to allowing visiting scholars to participate in relevant events like this, but ultimately this decision rests with the main organizers of the event in question. In our experience, the organizers are often open to letting visiting scholars take part, especially if they come from the same field of research.

## Chinese scholars

Making contact with relevant Chinese colleagues can be a challenge for scholars coming from other countries, especially those who don't speak Chinese, even though more and more Chinese academics are fluent in English. Chinese websites, even for universities, can be lacking in information compared to European and American websites, and the English versions of webpages are often outdated. In addition, due to a continuously rising international interest in collaboration with China, many researchers here are very busy with collaboration queries, and can be slow to respond, if they do so at all.



Nordic Centre has a network of researchers within a wide range of disciplines that we can help put you in contact with as part of your stay with. Many of these are researchers at Fudan University, but we also have contacts to other universities in Shanghai and elsewhere in China. Many are direct contacts whom we have worked with before (including those with a direct affiliation, [Nordic Centre Research Fellows](#), who have worked closely over time with the Nordic Centre and its members) and an even wider range in our secondary network. In many cases, we will not know a researcher in the specific field you are working in, but our close contacts at the Foreign Affairs Office and other departments at Fudan, such as Fudan Development Institute, can assist in this regard (but please ask Nordic Centre staff instead of going directly to them).

Even when it comes to scholars outside Shanghai whom we have not worked with before, an affiliation with the prestigious Fudan University as a Nordic Centre research fellow makes it more likely that you will get through. **If you wish, we can have business cards showing your affiliation as a visiting scholar at the Nordic Centre, Fudan University printed.** This comes at a small fee that covers printing expenses (about 20 RMB for 100 cards).

*If you want to interview someone or otherwise communicate in Chinese and don't speak the language yourself, we can help put you in contact with professional interpreters. We do not offer this service ourselves, but we can send you a price list and book interpreters from a professional agency (prices start at around 2,500 RMB for half a day, so unfortunately this is not something everyone can*

*afford). If you need translation or interpretation that isn't at this professional level, we recommend asking a student at Fudan to do it at a much lower fee; we can help put you in touch with someone.*

## Finding accommodation

Nordic Centre does not provide accommodation to visitors; however, we can suggest the below places to look for a place to stay whether shorter or longer term. The rental market in Shanghai is very dynamic and fast-paced, quite unlike the ones in Scandinavian cities; it isn't rare to find a place within just one day. However, many landlords will expect you to sign a contract for a minimum duration of 6 months or a year; finding a shorter term place can be somewhat more difficult, though still possible. Be aware that many require either a large deposit or several months of prepaid rent.

Also keep in mind that Shanghai is an enormous city. You either want to live close to Fudan University in the middle of [Yangpu District](#) (see red marker in the linked map for location), or near a subway station on line 10, which leads here.

We strongly recommend reading [SmartShanghai's guide to not getting cheated in the housing market](#), whether you find a place through them or otherwise.

[Smartshanghai.com](#) – free listing of various kinds of housing, including shared accommodations and short-term leases. When you check the location on the map, make sure you're aware of the scale. Distances can look deceptively short if you are used to maps of Nordic cities. Keep in mind that the address for Fudan is 220 Handan Road, in case you need to compare two locations.

[Air BnB](#) – Works just like other places. Good for shorter durations of a week or two. Most Air BnB hosts speak English.

[Tohee Mansion](#) – short-term housing in the Yangpu area, 30-minute walk from campus. 90-140 RMB per day. Please note that Tohee online provides linen and quilts, and not things like towels, mugs, plates, or other amenities you would expect in a hotel.

If you wish to stay at a regular hotel, the closest one is Crowne Plaza Fudan. Otherwise, you can use sites like hotels.com and expedia.com for bookings.

## Chinese visa

Please refer to the guidelines of your closest Chinese Visa Centre or Consular Section for visa application procedures (can be found online). Also be aware that decisions regarding visa-issuing are at the discretion of the consular officer's judgement, and not perfectly consistent. For example, on rare occasions, the invitation letter we issue for an F visa gets rejected as documentation.

To help you get a short-term work visit visa (F), the Nordic Centre can issue a letter of invitation to be used in the application (for longer stays, i.e. several months, this cannot be used). To get one, please write to programme manager Magnus Jorem on [magnus@nordiccentre.net](mailto:magnus@nordiccentre.net) with the following details:

Family name as written in passport



Given name(s) as written in passport

Nationality

Passport number

Date of birth (please spell out the month; September 1, 1980, **not** 1/9, 1980, or 9/1, 1980)

Job title

University

Expected date of arrival (does not have to be precise: you can specify a date earlier than your actual arrival)

Expected date of departure (does not have to be precise: you can specify a date later than your actual departure)

*It is preferable apply for your visa several weeks in advance in case of any complications with the application.*

*Please also keep in mind that we are not a visa service bureau. All visiting scholars and visitors in general are responsible for their own visa applications, and must read closely the instructions of their local consulate or embassy.*

## Arrival

We do not provide airport pickup services for arrivals, but advise you to use the following means of transportation.

**Cheapest:** Take the metro all the way to your destination. You buy a metro ticket with cash (coins are the easiest) and specify where you're getting off; it will put you back less than 10 RMB.

The closest subway stops to Fudan's main campus are on line 10: Guoquan Lu 国权路 (nearest the Nordic Centre in the southwest part of campus), Wujiaochang 五角场, and Jiangwan Stadium 江湾体育场 (both near the east part of Fudan's campus). Jiangwan Stadium is also close to [Tohee Mansions](#), one of the accommodation possibilities.

**Fast and affordable:** Take the Maglev (磁浮) train to Longyang Road station (龙阳路站) for 50 RMB and the metro from there.

**Convenient:** Get a cab at the designated taxi queuing area outside. Do **NOT** accept offers from anyone approaching you in arrivals saying "taxi, taxi" or similar; they are not genuine cab drivers and are out to trick you. Real taxi drivers in China almost never trick their passengers in our experience -- but the fake ones invariably try to. A ride to most parts of the city should be about 200 RMB, but it can vary quite a bit depending on the specific destination and traffic. The driver should always use the metre; you never bargain for a price beforehand. If you choose the taxi option and don't speak Chinese, do bring a printout of the address you're going to in Chinese characters. The drivers generally do not speak English.

Please let us know the date and time of your first arrival at the Nordic Centre beforehand. We like to take our visiting scholars out to an informal lunch on one of their first days, and introduce them to our staff and facilities.

When traveling locally in Shanghai, it is convenient to use a transportation card (交通卡). Purchase one in a metro station service counter, and refill it whenever necessary. Metro rides only cost a few RMB, depending on distance, and the card can also be used on buses and in taxis.

## Household registration

Within 24 hours of arriving in China, all foreigners must register with the local Public Security Bureau or face potential fines. If you check in at a hotel, this is automatic, but if you stay in an apartment or an Air BnB, you need to go there yourself. Ask your landlord to accompany you with his or her ID, the deed, your contract, your passport, and copies of all of these. Also include a copy of your Chinese visa and entry stamp.

If you have stayed in China before, you may have had the experience that the authorities are lax with this procedure, and that isn't the case any longer. We strongly encourage you to register in order to avoid unnecessary fines and trouble with the local authorities, even if it is a bit of a hassle when you've just arrived.

[Read more here.](#)



## Health issues

In China, people generally don't go to a European-style doctor's office when they get sick. Instead, they go straight to the hospital to see a medical professional. Chinese hospitals are typically large and crowded, and their prices are generally much lower than in Europe. However, since most hospital staff do not speak English, most of our visitors prefer to go to the foreigner-oriented health clinic Parkway, where all staff speak English fluently. This is a more expensive option, appointments costing 1,600 RMB at the minimum, so make sure you are covered by insurance if you choose this option. In case of emergencies, the following is the contact information for Parkway Health, which has several locations around Shanghai:

Web: [parkwayhealth.cn](http://parkwayhealth.cn)

Phone: 6445 5999 (24-hour appointment booking)

One health issue you may face in China in particular is air pollution. While Shanghai has considerably less smog than Beijing and many other cities, the air pollution can be a nuisance at times and be a big problem to people with asthma. You can track concentrations of dangerous particles, including



PM 2.5 particles, on a daily basis with various apps (like the one called Air Quality Index) or by following the [reports by the US Consulate](#). On smoggy days, consider wearing a pollution mask (in Chinese: “PM 2.5 口罩” or simply “口罩”; pronunciation: kǒuzhào) or if conditions are exceptionally bad, stay at home!

Some people also experience stomach problems as a result of the food, either because they have purchased food at places with low hygiene standards (e.g. street stalls), or because their stomachs are adjusting to a different bacterial flora. We wouldn't discourage trying ordinary, cheap restaurants or street food completely, but do advise visitors to be cautious about what they eat to see what their stomachs can handle, especially in the first few days.

## Internet advice

### *Firewall and VPN*

As you may know, China's internet is censored by what is known as The Great Firewall. In addition, local firewalls, including at universities, can prevent you from accessing websites like Google (and Google services like Google Scholar), Facebook, Youtube, and many others.

The way to get around this is to use a VPN, or Virtual Private Network, which tricks the firewall into thinking you're not actually inside China, and thereby letting you access blocked content. It is advised that you get a VPN service before entering China, as the websites of VPN-providers are also generally blocked (unsurprisingly). Often, smartphones with foreign sim cards roaming in China will also be able to access blocked contents even without a VPN. Although there is never a 100% guarantee that a VPN will work, one service that currently works quite consistently is [Astrill](#).

If you do not get a VPN, the recommended search engines for English-language pages is Yahoo, and for Chinese pages, Baidu.

### *Three useful smartphone apps*

- WeChat 微信 is a free communication app that seemingly everyone in China uses as of 2015, both for social and professional purposes. Very useful for networking – some people will even frown at you if you don't have WeChat!
- Pleco is a free English-Chinese app with an extensive vocabulary that can also be accessed offline. Very useful both for non-speakers of Chinese when getting around, and for those learning Chinese or English, including at advanced levels. Add-ons like the flashcard setting come at a price, however.
- If you read Chinese characters, Baidu Ditu 百度地图 is a useful map app – often better than the Google equivalent.

## Funding

The Nordic Centre can help finance your stay in China with our Research Platform with up to 350 RMB a week. [Please read our call for applications.](#)

Soon to come is also a guide to external sources of funding for Sino-Nordic research collaborations, which may help finance your stay.



## Shanghai in brief (very brief)

The largest city in China, and one of the largest in the world, Shanghai boasts a population equal to that of the entire Nordic region: 24 million. It is known for its colorful, international history and thriving contemporary development. To get an idea of what's going on (in English), you can check out the sites of city guides [TimeOut](#) and [City Weekend](#). For an accessible

introduction to its history, you may want to check out Stella Dong's *Shanghai – Rise and Fall of a Decadent City* or Lynn Pan's *Old Shanghai – Gangsters in Paradise*. See a [subway map here](#) – but note that it will likely soon be out of date due to the incredible pace of new construction...

## On the Nordic Centre

Founded in 1995 at one of China's top universities, Fudan University in Shanghai, the Nordic Centre serves as a platform for Sino-Nordic academic collaboration within all kinds of disciplinary areas. We have 26 member universities in the five Nordic countries for whom we support a range of different collaborations with China. These include 1) *educational activities* like the fall-semester elective course Nordic Studies for Chinese students, and shorter-term courses for students from our Nordic member universities, including the annual summer courses Doing Business in China and Chinese Politics and Society, and tailor-made courses for specific institutions, often including a mix of academic content and excursions. They also include 2) *research activities*, which besides the visiting scholars program described in this handbook includes a bi-annual conference in Shanghai, funding for seminars and research stays, organizing of such seminars and roundtables, and various kinds of support for the Sino-Nordic research networks. Additionally, we also organize 3) *Nordic cultural and social events* like film nights and student meet-ups, sometimes in collaboration with the consulates of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

### ***Any questions? Write to our staff:***

Programme Manager Magnus Jorem, [magnus@nordiccentre.net](mailto:magnus@nordiccentre.net)

Programme Officer Regina Wang, [regina@nordiccentre.net](mailto:regina@nordiccentre.net)

Programme Officer Gavin Chen, [gavin@nordiccentre.net](mailto:gavin@nordiccentre.net)