



Dear all,

As part of a review of the TELT OU/SCILT course in 2019/2020, we have had some feedback from teachers studying Mandarin Chinese in LXT197, who told us the following:

- they found the language hard to learn
- they found that the study took them about or more than 5 hours per week
- they did not always have the opportunity to apply their new Chinese skills in their classrooms due to curricular setup in their school

Following this, we investigated the retention and attainment rates on the Chinese module and found that 75% of teachers who started have now submitted their final assessment, and that the overall attainment is 89% - higher than on our standard OU Chinese module!

This shows us that the course is definitely manageable and students can study this very successfully. BUT - taking the feedback into consideration, we think that it would be really helpful if you were able to manage the expectations of teachers showing an interest in studying Chinese on this course.

We think the following should be communicated:

1. Chinese is much harder to learn than most European languages as it is very different not only in terms of pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary but also in the way it is written and in the way language is conceptualised.
2. As the best attainment can be achieved when teachers can directly apply their new language skills in their classroom, anyone wanting to study LXT197 should make sure that their schools support them in regularly being able to teach the language.
3. When studying Chinese, teacher should expect to put at least 5 hours per week aside for studying the language strand activities of the course. Teachers should be reminded that language learning is more effective when studying little but often rather than setting aside entire days. This means even 30-40 minutes per day would work well.
4. Anyone interested in studying Chinese should try to get a feel for what this would be like in our course. To do so, they can go through the free activities on our OpenLearn platform: <https://www.open.edu/openlearn/languages/chinese/beginners-chinese/content-section-0?active-tab=description-tab> There are materials covering 6 study hours, which will give prospective students a realistic impression of studying the Chinese language in the OU way.

Thank you very much for your support in this matter, which will help us ensure that teachers registering on LXT197 will have a positive and successful study experience.