

Mandarin Language Assistants

*Mandarin Language Assistants to support
Chinese language and culture programmes in New Zealand schools.*

Background

The New Zealand-China Free Trade Agreement Upgrade continues to allow Mandarin Language Assistants (MLAs) to temporarily work in New Zealand to facilitate the teaching and learning of Mandarin and to raise the quality of Mandarin language provision in New Zealand schools.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education and Confucius Institute in Auckland are part of this initiative with the Institute responsible for selecting, allocating and managing the incoming MLAs. Responsibilities also include providing MLA orientation and on-going professional and personal support; providing support to respective lead teachers in schools; and monitoring their progress during the school year.

The role and contribution of Mandarin Language Assistants

The role of an MLA is to assist the classroom teacher in teaching more effectively through providing information and insight into Chinese language and culture and modelling accurate pronunciation and intonation.

The Mandarin Language Assistants can:

- bring, through their presence, the target language and culture to the classroom;
- provide opportunities for students to interact with a native speaker, stimulating genuine classroom communications;
- assist teachers in the classroom and/or make small group work possible for more effective teaching;
- assist teachers to enhance their language and cultural knowledge;
- enable more students to take part in individual conversations in the target language and
- assist with the preparation of up-to-date resources using authentic language.

More information on how MLAs work in practice can be found at <https://ci.ac.nz/chinese-in-schools/mla-prog/>.

Funding

The Chinese International Education Foundation and Centre for Language Education and Cooperation in China will fund the international travel costs and living allowances for the MLAs for their placement year. Successful New Zealand schools are responsible for the MLAs' health insurance costs and homestay accommodation arrangements that should be clean, comfortable and convenient to schools, transport etc.

The MLA/Confucius Institute will contribute up to \$300-350/wk towards their homestay accommodation expenses. Costs above this amount will be made up by the participating schools. This is to ensure accommodation is of an acceptable standard and applicable to market rates.

The New Zealand Ministry of Education also contributes to the above costs for twelve MLAs.

Eligibility

All schools are eligible to apply to host an MLA, either individually or in partnership with neighbouring

schools. MLAs can assist with new or established Mandarin programmes.

Selection criteria

Preference will be given to schools that can demonstrate:

- a demand for, and commitment to, the teaching and learning of Mandarin;
- how the MLA programme will complement and build on current and previous initiatives the school has accessed for Mandarin programmes;
- how, and the extent to which, the placement of an MLA will support the development of their language programme, including student progression and achievement and staff capability;
- a partnership with neighbouring schools so that the MLA can support language programmes at a number/pathway of schools;
- how the MLA will be supported in the school and
- how their language programme will be developed and sustained following the conclusion of the MLA's placement.

The placement of MLAs will take into account the need for distribution on geographic grounds as well as across primary, intermediate and secondary schools within the Confucius Institute's region spanning from Northland to Waikato. Schools that have not had an MLA for more than three years are particularly encouraged to apply.

Expectations

Successful schools will be expected to:

- sign an agreement with Confucius Institute regarding the roles and responsibilities of each party to ensure the MLA programme runs smoothly and
- make commitments to developing a sustainable Chinese programme in their school.

Links to other initiatives

In addition to participating in the MLA scheme, schools can further develop their Mandarin language programmes through fully funded initiatives such as [Tui Tuia Learning Circle](#).

Refer to the [Learning Languages](#) site for further information and other available resources.

How to apply

Visit Confucius Institute <https://ci.ac.nz/chinese-in-schools/mla-prog/> and complete the Expression of Interest form online.

Successful schools will be notified within the month. MLA school principals/lead teachers will be **expected to attend a workshop** end of application year (Nov tbc) for background information and expectations of the programme. Please note this in your diary if applying!

The MLAs are usually expected to arrive in New Zealand at the end of January and in their homestays after a week's orientation to be able to start in schools at the beginning of term in February. Schools will need to make alternative arrangements if orientation and homestay dates do not fit in with their school term.

Contact

For further information, please contact Xiaolu (Rebecca) Wang, xiaolu.wang@auckland.ac.nz.

Note: the MLA programme will be available only if MLAs are able to do so in accordance with China and NZ regulations/border controls. Changes may arise at short notice.