This summer I had the fantastic opportunity to experience China. Taking part in the University Immersion Programme at Sichuan University has been one of the best experiences in my life! I was able to meet people from over 25 countries, form new friendships, and get to meet local people from Chengdu, who I must say were the kindest and most welcoming people I have ever met!

Based in Chengdu, in the Sichuan Province of China, Sichuan University is one of the largest higher education institutions in the country. The unique UIP which has been running since 2012 is aimed at strengthening relationships and strategic partnerships between academics, university students and institutions from over 25 countries.
The Sichuan University Summer UIP was an experience which allowed me to become more culturally aware. Spending two weeks in Chengdu, in the Sichuan province which is one of the culturally richest places in China has been an eye-opening experience, whereby I have been able to learn lots about different traditions, rituals and philosophies. Our hosts from Sichuan University, who were the friendliest and most caring and welcoming people I have ever met, had ensured that we had different activities every day of the programme. Some of those included: climbing mount Qingcheng, visiting the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding (*interesting fact: pandas originate from the Sichuan Province*), learning to play mahjong – a traditional Chinese game which was developed in the 17th century, trying the world-famous Sichuan Hot Pot, and much more!

In regards to the academic side of the UIP, we had a wide range of modules to select from as part of the learning element of the programme. I chose to take lectures on Global Business and Public Policy. Global Business was a topic I chose because it was directly linked to my Business Management degree at Queen Mary. I also chose Public Policy as one of the electives because this is an area I am interested in, and as our hosts were the School of Public Administration I wanted to experience their way of teaching and learn more about the methods used in Chinese Higher Education. Overall, I am very grateful to have been part of the Summer 19’ cohort of the Sichuan University UIP and I am thankful for being awarded an expeditions fund award which has helped cover some costs for the trip! This really was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity which I personally believe has been one of the best and most valuable things I have done with Queen Mary. I am certain I will be returning to China in the near future to see my friends and continue exploring all it has to offer! I highly encourage fellow QMUL students to apply – you don’t want to miss out on an opportunity like this!:)

*Georgi Stoyanov, BSc Business Management*