Full-time Professional Degree Graduate Practice Teaching Quality Assurance System Construction

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Abstract

To strengthen the practice teaching and the process management, construct and perfect the practice teaching quality assurance system, and explore a training mode in accordance with the rules of full-time professional degree graduate education, that play an important role in effectively improving the quality of professional degree graduate education and completing training targets. This paper analyzes factors of the full-time professional degree graduate practice teaching quality, points out prerequisites and foundations of perfecting professional practice teaching quality assurance system, and proposes measures to effectively improve the practice teaching quality assurance system.

Keywords: full-time; professional degree; practice teaching; quality assurance

1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, China’s graduate education can be divided into academic and professional degree in accordance with training modes. The difference in training targets is derived from various social needs, but they are equal in terms of social status. Since China has increase the enrollment of full-time professional degree graduates with a bachelor's degree from 2009, the scale of professional degree education has developed rapidly. According to statistics from the Ministry of Education, the enrollment of professional degree is only 15.9% accounting for the total number of graduate student enrollment in 2009 when the full-time professional degree starts to be recruited. The enrollment has been increased to 43.9% in 2015, with an average annual growth rate of 29.4%. Professional degree education is to cultivate students' vocational skills and solve actual problems, providing high-level application-oriented talents with outstanding professional abilities for the society (Huang, 2010). The particular training targets decide that professional degree education pays more attention to the cultivation of students' practice abilities (Zhu et al., 2017). Therefore, strengthening the practice teaching and process management, constructing and perfecting the practice teaching quality assurance system, as well as exploring a training mode in accordance with the rules of full-time professional degree graduate education undoubtedly play an important role in effectively improving the quality of professional degree graduate education and completing training targets.

The cultivating process of professional degree graduate education is generally divided into three stages: fundamental knowledge learning, professional practice and dissertation. The professional practice generally refers to that students conduct specialized professional practice learning and training in enterprises, institutions and other practical bases under the unified guidance of college and off-campus tutors, in order to seek and find the existing problems from the practice learning and complete the dissertation subject selection and proposal based on the specific needs. The professional practice forms a connecting link between the preceding and the following for the cultivating process. It is the extension and application of the fundamental knowledge learning as well as the preparation and accumulation of the dissertation. It can be seen that the high quality and effective development of the professional practice teaching is the key to guarantee the cultivation quality of full-time professional degree graduate education and the successful achievements of the established training targets (Wen et al., 2010). The quality assurance system is an effective guarantee of the practice teaching to truly play its essential role in forming a connecting link between the preceding and the following. Therefore, how to construct and perfect the full-time professional degree graduate practice teaching quality assurance system is an important problem faced during the current cultivating process of professional degree education.
2. ANALYSIS ON FACTORS OF FULL-TIME PROFESSIONAL DEGREE GRADUATE PRACTICE TEACHING QUALITY

2.1 Subjective Factors

2.1.1 Students’ Poor Practice Abilities

In order to meet the needs of economic and social development, the professional degree graduate education has been paid more and more attention. However, the poor practice abilities of professional degree graduate students are still the bottleneck of the quality improvement. Most majors are to recruit fresh graduates in addition to several majors such as the MBA enroll students with practical experience in professional degree graduate examinations. At present, graduating students take a large proportion of the enrollments of each full-time professional degree educating unit. The high rate of graduating students, with a weak foundation of practice abilities, is lack of social experience and ability training of practice. These students directly enter into the professional degree graduate study stage after graduating from colleges, almost with no professional practice and work experience. Though they have had some professional practice training during their undergraduate study, it is very superficial. In addition, under the current College Entrance Examination System, students from universities of "211" and "985" projects who plan to further study mainly engage in theoretical research, while most students from independent colleges who prepare the Postgraduate Entrance Examination from freshman with poor theoretical foundation and practice abilities prefer the professional degree graduate to change their education backgrounds. The lack of professional practice experience can easily cause full-time professional degree graduate students not only lack of purposes in learning basic theoretical knowledge, but also with poor practice abilities in taking the initiative to find and solve practical problems, which will further affect the quality of dissertation. Students’ poor practice abilities, which should get enough attention, are regarded as a common problem during the cultivating process of each full-time professional degree educating unit. Each full-time professional degree educating unit should study and explore how to truly strengthen students' practice abilities in the cultivating process of full-time professional degree graduate, and how the professional practice effectively plays a key role to form a connecting link between the preceding and the following, in order to strengthen the connection among fundamental knowledge learning, professional practice and dissertation.

2.1.2 Inadequate Communication and Coordination between College and Off-campus Tutors

Both college and off-campus tutors are conducive to the all-round development of students and their abilities to serve economic and social development. College mentors’ key role is in the cultivation of students' learning abilities, methods and professional competences with solid theories but poor practice abilities. The role of off-campus tutors is to improve students’ practice skills and professional ethics. (Shi et al., 2011) Off-campus tutors usually are front-line staff with enough time and experience on their duties, but have an unsystematic theoretical study. Therefore, it is difficult for college and off-campus tutors to conduct in-depth communication and reach a unified understanding about students’ cultivation because of their differences in employment units, working contents, time, and respective advantages, causing a disjunction and incoordination between theories and practices during the cultivating process of professional degree graduate and affecting the effective cultivation of graduate practice abilities (Wang, 2016).

2.2 Objective Factors

2.2.1 Difficulties in Practical Base Management

In recent years, the government, enterprises and institutions of higher learning attach great importance to the practice training of professional degree graduate, and build a number of practical bases. However, there are a lot of problems in terms of the base usage. First of all, enterprises are not very active in building the practical bases with institutions of higher learning. The reason is that colleges and universities don’t really allow enterprises to engage in the whole process of talent training, and enterprises’ real needs cannot be satisfied in this process. At the same time, companies also have no access to more social benefits. (Du et al., 2017) Secondly, in the process of building practical bases, the subject characteristics and the base building cannot be integrated, resulting in the practical base building without any characteristics. Thirdly, the practical base building prefers the construction to the management and values the approval rather than the inspection. Most colleges and universities invest a lot of manpower and material resources in the process of declaration and construction. But after the completion of construction, their poor management may not only lead to the base usage cannot produce desired effects, but
also pose safety and security risks to enterprises. Meanwhile, the management institutions of colleges and universities are lack of corresponding inspection and evaluation systems with clear responsibilities, causing a large gap between the normative management and the expectation of bases.

2.2.2 Implementation of Various Safeguard Measures

With the deepening of Chinese higher education reform, our nation has put forward a lot of specific training requirements about graduate education, especially the professional degree graduate education, but how to guarantee these specific requirements becomes a major problem in colleges and universities. First, the tutors’ guidance is difficult to be guaranteed in practice. Due to the state asks professional degree graduate students to go to enterprises to be interns for more than 6 months, it is hard for tutors to guide students as they stay at school during this period of learning. Second, the double tutorial system is difficult to guarantee. Under the current education system, the process of recruiting tutors rarely pays attention to practical or professional skills, causing most of tutors enjoy rich theoretical knowledge but poor practice abilities, or rather, their theory and practice are disjunctive and they are not up to the cultivation of professional degree graduate (Sun and Cao, 2012). Thus, colleges and universities can only hire tutors from related industries, but many off-campus mentors become a mere formality because of their work, salaries and assessments (Chen et al., 2013). In addition, colleges and universities also pay high attention to the students’ security in practical process, the financial input and other issues.

3. PREREQUISITES AND FOUNDATIONS OF PERFECTING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE TEACHING QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

3.1 Institutional Basis

Establishing and perfecting operable rules and regulations are the prerequisites of perfecting professional practice teaching quality assurance system. Firstly, a complete set of rules and regulations should be established and improved so that the practice teaching has rules to follow (Gao and Lu, 2013). Rules and regulations cover the base management, students’ management, course standards, practice project setting, practice credits identification, tutors’ management, funds, and students’ security to ensure the completion of students’ practice training with high standards. Secondly, the examination and evaluation system of practice teaching should be strengthened (Wang et al., 2015). When the department of education examines the professional degree graduate education, the evaluation of practice teaching should be the key point which can be subdivided into several secondary indexes to check and test individually with high standards, urging colleges and universities attach great importance to the practice teaching.

3.2 Perfecting Training Programs

Perfecting talent training programs of professional degree graduate is an important factor to realize teaching effects and a guiding document of the whole training process (Yuan et al., 2015). The difference in training programs between professional and academic degree graduate should reflect clear career directions and highlights in practice teaching. Firstly, talent training programs should be employment-oriented and cultivate application-oriented talents who serve the front-line production and management. Secondly, the establishment of training programs should effectively combine the teaching and off-campus practice, and fully take students’ future career planning into consideration. Thirdly, the formulation of talent training programs should effectively integrate the requirements of enterprises or related industries for talents, and set up flexible curricula according to the social and industry development. Fourthly, the assessment criteria of curricula should be unified with the industry standards, making industry requirements be important factors to guide the teaching.

3.3 Construction of Tutorial Staff

The construction of tutorial staff is a key factor to ensure the quality of practice teaching. At present, most colleges and universities adopt the double tutorial system for the professional degree graduate education, that is, students are cultivated by both college mentors who are mainly responsible for theoretical teaching and off-campus tutors who take charge of the practice. Therefore, possessing a huge and excellent off-campus tutor team is a prerequisite of the effective practice teaching (Wang et al., 2013). Firstly, the recruitment and evaluation mechanism of off-campus tutors should be improved continuously, including recruitment of off-
should construct a practice education mechanism combining the college and enterprises situation of graduate students in enterprises, as well to say, its main function is still teaching. At the same time, regard solving the practice abilities.

To engage in scientific researches and productions, both sides and research enterprises' actual technological and administrative demands based on the cooperation of are established, which take enterprises' actual requirements and benefits as drivers as work out solutions for the problems occurred in the practice. Then, long conferences to discuss and communicate the whole practice.

First of all, on the campus tutors and evaluation criteria of their practice teaching. At the same time, colleges and universities should interact with enterprises, making their assessment results be an important indicator of their promotions in positions and professional titles, so as to motivate off-campus tutors. Second, institutions of higher learning should prone to select professional and technical personnel who engage in scientific researches and productions as off-campus tutors. These high quality skilled talents are more conducive to improving students' practical effects, and make up for the defects of college tutors with rich theoretical knowledge but poor practice abilities. Thirdly, the relationship between college and off-campus tutors should be handled correctly. In general, the function of off-campus tutors should be embodied in promoting graduate students' professional abilities and communicating enterprise culture. In this respect, the institutions should fully respect off-campus tutors’ work, and perfect their compensation system.

3.4 Construction of Practical Bases

Practical bases are essential carriers for graduate students to conduct practical learning in enterprises (Chai, 2013). Therefore, building up a series of long-term and stable practical bases provides an opportunity for graduate students to train and exercise their own practice research and application skills as planned, select their dissertation subjects, as well as effectively guarantee training targets achieved according to the needs of the society and their own professional development. In order to further improve the level and effect of practice teaching, colleges and universities should construct a practice education mechanism combining the college and off-campus practical bases. Firstly, the main function of college practical bases is to provide basic teaching support for students to practice in enterprises in the future. That is to say, its main function is still teaching. At the same time, there are still some gaps between college practical bases and the real industry in terms of the hardware construction, software development and actual operation. Therefore, off-campus practical bases, taking advantage of the industry, should be actively expanded with the continuous improvement of college practical bases. Secondly, colleges and universities should invest more in off-campus practical bases. Currently, insufficient funds are one of bottlenecks of the off-campus practical bases development. Finance support could increase the number of mentors, expand student coverage, produce more results of practical bases, etc. Thirdly, colleges and universities apply all reasonable resources and a variety of ways to seek and try to cooperate with enterprises, establishing a hierarchy of off-campus practical bases with different benefits and impacts. At first, institutions of higher learning can take advantage of multiple disciplines and higher influences on the university level to actively seek enterprises’ supports and expanding cooperation relations, as well as establish long-term and stable university-level off-campus practical bases across multiple disciplines with some large enterprises. Second, professional degree departments actively exert their discipline advantages, expand and strengthen the horizontal cooperation and contact, as well as establish several discipline-oriented department-level off-campus practical bases. Third, in the light of using crosswise projects and other cooperation relations between college mentors and related companies in this industry, colleges and universities encourage college mentors to recommend graduate students to practice and study in cooperated companies, so that a series of off-campus practical bases which are connected and managed by college mentors are established. In this way, building a variety of practical bases provides larger spaces for graduate students in choosing the study directions and contents, so as to they have an opportunity to select a more suitable practical base to meet the requirements of the society and their own professional development, further developing their practice research and application skills and laying a good foundation for the writing of dissertation.

4. CONCLUSION

The measures to improve the practice teaching quality assurance system include the following.

4.1 Construction and Improvement of Management System Coordinated by both Universities and Enterprises

First of all, on the basis of the agreements of joint cultivation of production, education and research, both sides establish a regular meeting system. Leaders from both sides see each other regularly and organize working conferences to discuss and communicate the whole practice situation of graduate students in enterprises, as well as work out solutions for the problems occurred in the practice. Then, long-term and stable cooperation relations are established, which take enterprises’ actual requirements and benefits as drivers, regard solving the enterprises’ actual technological and administrative demands based on the cooperation of production, education and research as a starting point, and produce real effects for companies in economically. Thirdly, universities
and enterprises should jointly carry out a number of science research projects that are main contents of graduate students’ practice in enterprises. These common contents for both college and off-campus tutors further promote their communication and exchanges, as well as have more incentive to guide the graduate to finish their tasks together. Thus, the double tutorial system will be really implemented in the process of practice. Fourthly, an incentive system is formulated for practical bases to support and encourage teachers and graduate students enter the bases for further study and work according to the policy and treatment, have knowledge about the enterprises’ actual productions, find existing problems in the production and management, as well as research and find solutions, realizing a win-win situation for both talents training of professional degree graduate and enterprises’ economic benefits.

4.2 Weekly Plan System and Monthly Report System

Graduate students who practice in enterprises must do a weekly plan for every week to record the specific internship experience, gains, problems and solutions which should be checked and signed by off-campus tutors in case of college mentors’ inspection, so that both off-campus tutors and college mentors could know the graduate students’ internship status in a timely manner. Meanwhile, interns must submit an internship summary to college mentors for at least a month, known as a monthly report, to show their practice situation and research progress in this month, so that college mentors and off-campus tutors could conduct effective communications to exactly master graduate students’ learning and research progress in companies, as well as jointly research and consolate solutions for existing issues in time.

4.3 Supervision of Practical Bases

The professional degree graduate education departments should transfer a certain amount of personnel from the professional fields’ and enterprises’ experts to organize a team of experts supervising graduate students’ practice. The team of experts visits practical bases and checks the graduate students’ practice situation regularly in the form of raid or advance notice. At the same time, The team has a regular informal discussion with leaders of off-campus practical bases and off-campus mentors to survey the whole practice situation of graduate students in enterprises, as well as communicates with interns to understand and master their difficulties encountered in practice learning and problems to be solved that should be reported to departments timely. Therefore, the professional degree graduate education departments could strengthen the control and supervision over graduate students’ practice in enterprises.

4.4 Enterprises’ Practice and Innovation Scholarship

The construction of scholarship system is a key means to motivate graduate students to be self-reliant and work hard, as well as is of great significance in constructing an internal incentive mechanism and a long-term assurance mechanism of education quality for full-time professional degree graduate education and improving the quality of graduate education. Special scholarships for enterprises’ practice and innovation focusing on the experience accumulation and the improvement of practice abilities are set up to motivate and arouse the enthusiasm of the graduate students’ practice learning and innovation. The enterprises’ practice scholarship is mainly to reward the full-time professional degree graduate students who have performed well in the practice and received the recognition of enterprises or relevant units. While the innovation scholarship is to reward those who have made outstanding achievements in science and technology competitions, patent inventions and other innovation activities with some social and economic benefits. Special scholarships for enterprises’ practice and innovation can further motivate graduate students to maintain a high level of enthusiasm in the improvement of enterprises’ practice and innovation abilities.

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