

Construction of Graduate Supervisors in the New Era: System Establishment, Practical Approaches and Development Goals

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Abstract

The team of graduate supervisors constitutes the core force for cultivating high-level innovative talents. The level of its construction directly affects the quality of graduate education, the supply of national strategic talents, and the core competitiveness of universities. Based on the new situation of China's graduate education development, this article systematically expounds the strategic value and practical significance of the construction of graduate supervisor teams. From five dimensions including policy and system, selection and training, evaluation and incentives, mentoring relationship, internationalization and digitalization, it constructs a research framework and practical content for the construction of supervisor teams, and proposes phased construction goals of short-term standardization, medium-term optimization, and long-term leadership. The research aims to provide theoretical references and practical paths for improving the supervisor management system, enhancing the educational ability of supervisors, optimizing the educational ecosystem, and promoting the high-quality development of graduate education.

Keywords: Graduate supervisor, Team building, Cultivating virtue and fostering talents, Training quality, Educational reform, Guidance relationship.

1. Introduction

Postgraduate education, as the pinnacle of the national education system, is an important component of the national innovation system and the main channel for cultivating high-level and outstanding innovative talents. As the primary person responsible for the cultivation process, postgraduate supervisors bear key responsibilities such as academic guidance, value shaping, and ability development. Their political literacy, professional ethics, academic level, and guiding ability directly determine the quality of talent cultivation. Currently, China's postgraduate education has entered a new stage where both scale expansion and quality improvement are emphasized, as well as structural optimization and model innovation being pursued simultaneously [1,2]. With the deepening of interdisciplinary studies, the rapid development of professional degrees, and the deepening of the technological revolution, higher requirements are placed on the supervisor team. At the same time, issues such as unscientific supervisor selection, overemphasis on research and neglect of education in evaluation, incomplete training systems, and imbalanced supervisory relationships still exist, hindering the release of educational effectiveness. Strengthening the construction of postgraduate supervisor teams is not only an inherent requirement for implementing the fundamental task of fostering virtue and cultivating talents but also a strategic measure to serve national strategies, deepen educational reforms, and promote the construction of "Double First-Class" universities [3-5]. Based on theory and practice integration, this article systematically reviews the research significance, core contents, and stage goals of supervisor team construction, providing systematic ideas for the construction of supervisor teams in the new era.

2. Research Significance of the Construction of Graduate Supervisors' Team

(1) Core Guarantee for Serving National Major Strategic Needs and Cultivating Outstanding Innovative Talents

Graduate education is an important support for the core competitiveness of the country. Supervisors are the direct implementers of innovative talent cultivation. Building a team of supervisors with strong political stance, proficient professional skills, and excellent educational abilities is the fundamental guarantee for enhancing the research and innovation capabilities of graduate students, generating original research results, and supporting self-reliance and strength

in science and technology [6]. Supervisors are not only knowledge transmitters but also value leaders, research guides, and personality formulators. Their educational level directly affects whether they can cultivate new era individuals with patriotism, global vision, innovative spirit, and a sense of responsibility, providing strategic talent support for national rejuvenation.

(2) Key Handle for Improving the Quality of Graduate Education

The academic ability, guidance efficiency, professional ethics, and educational investment of supervisors directly affect the research training, academic norms, innovative thinking, and comprehensive quality of graduate students. Systematic research on the construction of supervisors' team is conducive to solving training bottlenecks, optimizing guidance models, and improving educational effectiveness, ensuring the quality of education from the source [7,8]. Facing the new situation of expanding graduate student scale, diversified training types, accelerated interdisciplinary development, and rapid technological iteration, it is urgent to keep up with the times and improve the knowledge structure, interdisciplinary vision, and modern guidance capabilities of supervisors to adapt to the requirements of high-quality education.

(3) Intrinsic Requirement for Deepening Comprehensive Reform of Graduate Education

At present, there are still problems such as imperfect selection mechanisms, evaluation systems that overly focus on research, incomplete training systems, unclear responsibilities and rights, and insufficient long-term mechanisms for promoting professional ethics. Systematic research and solving these problems are important foundations for promoting the reform of the admission system, training mode, and quality evaluation. Integrating moral education throughout the process of supervisor selection, training, assessment, and incentives, strengthening ideological and political leadership and the main responsibility for education, is an inevitable requirement for building a "three-all education" framework and adhering to the socialist educational direction [9].

(4) Solid Foundation for Promoting In-Depth Convergence and "Double First-Class" Construction of Universities

The level of faculty is the core indicator of a university's core competitiveness. A high-level team of supervisors is a concentrated manifestation of discipline strength, research capabilities, and social reputation, and is a key factor in attracting high-quality students. Strengthening the construction of supervisors' team, gathering leading talents and young backbone, optimizing the disciplinary, age, and academic background structure, is a strategic fulcrum for universities to enhance core competitiveness and achieve in-depth development. Excellent supervisors, as leaders of discipline directions and team cohesion, play an irreplaceable role in consolidating discipline advantages, cultivating interdisciplinary fields, and supporting "Double First-Class" construction [10].

(5) Urgent Need to Optimize Supervisory Relationship and Create a Favorable Educational Ecological Environment

Problems such as misconduct and tense supervisory relationships of some supervisors affect the educational environment and educational credibility. Deepening the construction of supervisors' team, improving the long-term mechanism for promoting professional ethics, clarifying the boundaries of guiding behavior, and perfecting communication feedback and rights protection mechanisms are conducive to building a harmonious and healthy supervisory relationship that promotes mutual promotion and progress [11,12]. Through scientific evaluation, reasonable burden reduction, and improvement of incentives, stimulating the enthusiasm of supervisors for education, and creating a scholarly ecological and educational atmosphere with a clean and upright atmosphere and a focus on academic research.

(6) Important Component for Promoting the Modernization of Education Governance System and Governance Capacity

Carrying out empirical research to accurately grasp the current situation, problems, and development demands of the supervisor team can provide data support and theoretical basis for the country and universities to formulate precise and effective construction policies. Establishing a supervisor management system and operational mechanism that conforms to educational laws, reflects Chinese characteristics, and is consistent in rights, responsibilities, and interests can help improve the professionalization, refinement, and modernization level of graduate education governance.

In conclusion, the construction of graduate student mentors is a fundamental and strategic project that is crucial to the national talent strategy, safeguarding the lifeline of educational quality, guiding the connotative development of higher education, and fulfilling the task of fostering virtue. It is also the core engine that responds to the challenges of the times and drives the high-quality development of graduate education.

3. Main Research Contents of the Construction of Graduate Supervisor Team

The construction of graduate supervisor teams in Chinese universities follows the main line of "improving systems - enhancing capabilities - optimizing relationships - ensuring quality", focusing on five core dimensions.

(1) Policy framework and system construction

Centered on fostering virtue and cultivating talents, promote the implementation of macro policies and institutional innovation. First, refine policy implementation details, convert national guiding guidelines into operational norms for universities, clearly defining key clauses such as "one-vote veto" for professional ethics and conduct, and the boundaries of non-academic affairs. Second, improve the responsibility and authority mechanism, clarify the core rights and responsibilities of supervisors in recruitment, training, and guidance, and improve the annual review system for admission qualifications, clarifying the rights and obligations of the university, the supervisor, and the student. Third, implement classified management, for different disciplines and different levels of training, establish differentiated institutional systems for classified recruitment, evaluation, and support.

(2) Optimization of supervisor selection and training system

Adhere to the principle of combining virtue and ability, upgrade selection standards and systematically enhance capabilities. First, optimize selection standards, shift from a single academic orientation to a comprehensive evaluation of "academic ability + educational quality + responsibility and commitment", balancing quantitative indicators with qualitative assessment. Second, improve the layered and classified training system, construct basic, intermediate, and specialized training modules, covering policy norms, interdisciplinary guidance, mental health support, and international communication, and promoting regular communication platforms. Third, innovate the selection mechanism, break through the barriers of professional titles and qualifications, establish a breakthrough selection mechanism for outstanding young talents, and prioritize ability.

(3) Innovation of evaluation and incentive mechanisms

Overcome the tendency of emphasizing research over education, and build a scientific and diverse system. First, establish comprehensive evaluation indicators, incorporate educational effectiveness into the core dimensions, implement multi-party assessment, and strengthen process evaluation. Second, implement developmental evaluation, weaken quantitative indicators, and highlight the innovation ability, academic norms, and long-term development achievements of graduate students. Third, improve the incentive and restraint mechanism, strengthen training support, academic leave, and preferential evaluation, and improve the dynamic adjustment mechanism for admission quotas and qualification withdrawal, ensuring clear rewards and punishments and orderly tolerance.

(4) Transformation of teacher-student relationship and guidance model

Based on the characteristics of the teacher-student culture, promote the modernization of the guidance model. First, standardize the guidance relationship, guide the traditional master-apprentice relationship to transform into academic guidance, equal collaboration, and clearly define the reasonable boundaries of scientific research labor, curbing the "boss-like" tendency. Second, promote the upgrading of the guidance model, transform from a single supervisor system to a team guidance system, improve the mechanism of leading supervisor + deputy supervisor, and cross-disciplinary supervisor group, preventing responsibility dispersion. Third, establish a conflict resolution mechanism, set up a specialized mediation institution, and establish standardized complaint channels and privacy protection mechanisms.

(5) Enhancement of internationalization and digitalization capabilities

Adapt to globalization and technological changes, expand the boundary of supervisor capabilities. First, strengthen internationalization capacity building, conduct cross-cultural communication training, improve the dual-supervisor system for Chinese and foreign, and build a system for enhancing cross-cultural guidance capabilities. Second, promote digital empowerment, explore AI-assisted guidance, and the construction of online guidance platforms, strengthen applications such as academic norm detection, research direction support, etc., adhere to the humanistic guidance orientation, and prevent data privacy risks.

4. Main Objectives of the Construction of Graduate Supervisors' Team

Adhere to the phased approach to achieve the coordinated improvement of supervisors' capabilities and training quality, and form a development pattern of short-term norms, medium-term optimization, and long-term leadership.

(1) Short-term goals (1-3 years): Lay a solid foundation, set clear bottom lines

Implement the detailed policies for moral education and cultivation, clarify the standards of teacher ethics and the list of responsibilities and rights, and achieve full coverage of annual review of admission qualifications; 100% of new supervisors receive pre-job training, additional basic modules on academic norms and mental health are added, and pilot cross-disciplinary training is conducted in key universities; more than half of the universities will incorporate educational effectiveness into the core indicators for promotion and evaluation, reducing the weight of quantitative research.

(2) Mid-term goals (3-5 years): Optimize the system, enhance capabilities

Establish a differentiated system of classified recruitment, classified training, and classified evaluation, with over 80% of universities establishing supervisor development centers to provide regular support; the cross-disciplinary and international guidance capabilities of supervisors have significantly improved, the satisfaction rate of international students in guidance has reached the standard, and the AI-assisted guidance platform has achieved pilot coverage; the proportion of supervisory tensions has significantly decreased, and the dispute mediation mechanism operates in a standardized manner.

(3) Long-term goals (5-10 years): Form an ecosystem, lead quality

Form a supervisor culture of moral education and cultivation, academic freedom, and equal collaboration, achieving the deep integration of traditional mentorship culture and modern educational concepts; Build a construction system in line with international leading standards, significantly improving the internationalization and digitalization levels of supervisors; The effectiveness of team building will be fully transformed into a significant improvement in training quality, the innovation ability, academic literacy, and development quality of graduate students will continue to improve, providing strong support for the supply of high-level talents for the country.

5. Conclusion

The construction of graduate student mentors is a systematic project that is characterized by its long-term nature, strategic importance, and practicality. In the new era, to promote the high-quality construction of the mentor team, we must take fostering virtue and cultivating talents as the foundation, ensure the improvement of systems as the guarantee, focus on enhancing capabilities as the core, base it on optimizing relationships as the foundation, and lead it with innovation-driven approaches. By establishing a systematic institutional framework, a precise training system, a scientific evaluation system, and a modern guidance system, we can continuously stimulate the educational vitality of mentors and comprehensively enhance the quality of the mentor team, providing solid support for building a strong educational nation, a strong technological nation, and a strong talent nation.

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