

Study on the Review of Graduate Program Offerings and Disclosure of Information

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Abstract: As the basic work of graduate course construction, the review of graduate course offerings and disclosure of information are the cornerstones for improving the quality of graduate course construction and an important aspect of deepening the reform of graduate education. This paper introduces and researches the advantages, participating subjects, implementation procedures and characteristics of the review and information disclosure of postgraduate course offerings in higher education institutions, aiming to provide a reference and basis for the review and information disclosure of postgraduate course offerings in higher education institutions.

1. Introduction

Since 2015, when the state first issued a special document on postgraduate course construction, the content of postgraduate course construction has become increasingly clear and detailed. The state's guidance on the construction of postgraduate courses covers almost the whole process of postgraduate training. It puts forward the establishment of a perfect mechanism for declaring and approving new courses, clarifying the standards for curriculum setting, adhering to the review of courses according to needs and standards, and paying attention to the participation of graduated postgraduates and employers in the review of courses in addition to the management department and internal and external experts, placing the review of the opening of postgraduate courses and the public disclosure of information at a prominent position of postgraduate curriculum construction. In 2020, the state put forward the requirements for curriculum construction of "improving the approval mechanism of curriculum setting and teaching content, and optimizing the curriculum system." In 2023, based on the original requirements, the state will further improve the mechanism for improving the curriculum system and regulate the setting and review of the curriculum classification of academic degrees and professional degrees. The national requirements for postgraduate courses are becoming increasingly standardized and clear.

Strengthening the cultivation of postgraduates' innovative ability and improving the quality of postgraduates' cultivation are important tasks in China's postgraduate education (Jiang, 2012)[1]. In contrast, postgraduate courses, as the foundation of the whole postgraduates' cultivation process, have an irreplaceable key role in forming postgraduates' innovative ability. Therefore, as the first step of postgraduate course construction, establishing a perfect postgraduate course review and information disclosure mechanism has become an unavoidable key link in the construction of

postgraduate courses. This paper aims to provide a reference and basis for the review and disclosure of graduate courses by studying the common practices of some domestic and foreign higher education institutions on the review and disclosure of graduate courses.

Throughout the higher education institutions in the country and abroad where the quality of postgraduate education is outstanding, the review of their course offerings and information disclosure basically has the following advantages ①postgraduate course offerings and review should be based on the scientific concept of education, highlighting the school's talent cultivation goals and positioning; ②emphasize the collaborative cooperation of various groups, such as students, teachers, schools, and other social resources; ③student-centered, and the establishment of student-centered growth with the The curriculum system is student-centered; ④Teachers, as the main body of curriculum development, can actively participate in the review of curriculum development; ④The school encourages and stimulates the enthusiasm of all kinds of groups to participate in guaranteeing the development and review of curriculum and guaranteeing its standardization through the enhancement of the system and mechanism; ⑤ The review of curriculum development has a clear standard and operation process; ⑥The review of curriculum development is approved by a clear department; ⑦Information disclosure targets are wide-ranging, including current teachers and students as well as graduates and the public; ⑧ Information disclosure is comprehensive, mainly including course syllabi, lecture programs, and reference materials; ⑨Teachers and students have a high degree of acceptance of information disclosure; and ⑩Information disclosure relies on the science and technology platform, and the information is timely and effective.

2. Review of course offerings

Currently, the review of postgraduate course offerings in higher education institution is still based on teachers' wishes, and such courses may need to align with the university's overall talent cultivation goals, thus resulting in a waste of postgraduate teaching resources. The review of postgraduate courses should be a systematic cycle: existing courses → improving existing courses → designing new courses → revising new courses, and the core of the review of course offerings is a comprehensive evaluation based on the courses (Tian, 2014)[2].

Institutions involved in the review of postgraduate courses are mainly divided into on-campus and off-campus institutions, with on-campus institutions as the main body of the review of course offerings and off-campus institutions as the complementary body, and the two types of institutions cooperating to complete the review of postgraduate course offerings. On-campus curriculum review mainly involves academic management institutions at the faculty level, academic management institutions of graduate schools, review of school curriculum organizations, and in some higher education institutions, there are also special student organizations involved in curriculum review; off-campus curriculum review mainly involves experts from enterprises and related industries, as well as graduated postgraduates and so on.

The procedures for reviewing graduate course offerings vary from school to school but generally include the following procedures. First, the university's curriculum organizing body commissions the Graduate School to issue an announcement of course offerings; second, faculty members or groups of faculty members put forward their intention to offer new courses; third, the applicant fills out the application form for course offerings under the guidance of the departmental academic management body, stating the basic conditions of the proposed new course, including the course description, course requirements, and the preliminary budget; fourth, the departmental academic management body invites the relevant experts in the course area for validation; fifth, the academic

governing body at the faculty level provides timely feedback to the applicant on the review; sixth, the applicant obtains permission to offer the course from the academic governing body of the Graduate School and develops a full course programme; Seventh, the academic governing body of the Graduate School submits the course programme to the university's curriculum organising body for review and feedback to the applicant; eighth, the applicant receives permission for the course programme from the university's curriculum organising body; ninth, the curriculum governing body creates a course code for the new course; and tenth, the new course is implemented and is subject to cyclical curriculum review. Reviewing postgraduate course offerings is a fundamental work with relatively complex and strict procedures, which is very meaningful for improving the quality of postgraduate training. For now, the review of graduate course offerings in higher education institutions has distinctive features. The procedure for reviewing graduate courses in higher education institutions is shown in Figure 1.

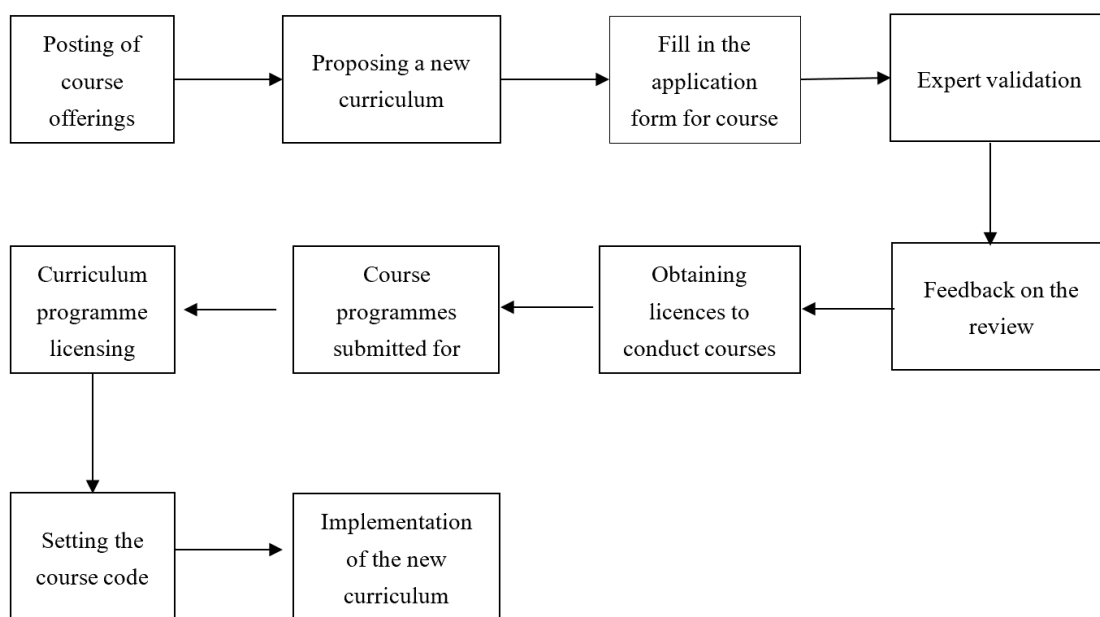


Figure 1: Review process for graduate course offerings in higher education institutions

2.1. The curriculum review mechanism is relatively robust

Most of the schools adopt the three-tier review mechanism of faculties, graduate schools and schools for the review of course offerings and rely on relevant experts and scholars and multiple departments to divide the work and cooperate to facilitate the full mobilization of all parties to the review of course offerings and the opening of meaningful and valuable postgraduate courses.

2.2. Applicant review materials are well-targeted and prepared

During the process of course application and course program review, the applicant is required to consult a large amount of information and complete relevant forms in order to answer all kinds of questions in the review, as well as to design a complete syllabus, assessment methods and so on, which are all incorporated into the process of reviewing the course offerings, which is both a test and a way of improvement for the course applicant (Liang and Guo, 2014)[3].

2.3. Relatively rigorous review process

The graduate course offering review process requires several procedures, including review, discussion, feedback, revision, and re-review before it is passed. Course applications and programs must pass internal university review requirements and external academic and industry experts before they can be formally implemented, thus ensuring a high quality and level of course offerings.

2.4. Participation in all types of institutions

Various institutions review postgraduate course offerings, mainly involving applicants, department heads, teachers, graduate schools, university course organizations, student groups, relevant experts and scholars. The participation of various institutions provides a strong guarantee for the development of high-quality postgraduate courses.

2.5. Curriculum review is ongoing

The university reviews the graduate courses at regular intervals, finds out the problems in the process of course implementation through the review, constantly revises and improves the courses, eliminates the courses that do not meet the requirements of graduate training, and pushes forward the innovation in the process of the review to design new courses (Zhang et al., 2023)[4]. The existing curricula → improve the existing curricula → design new curricula → revise the new curricula, forming a virtuous cycle to improve the competitiveness of graduate training.

3. Disclosure of information on postgraduate courses

The disclosure of graduate course information refers to the process of disclosing information about the courses offered by the university to students (including both enrolled and non-enrolled students) and the public. The course information is usually published through a special website, and the public content mainly includes the course curriculum information, teaching arrangement information, course study materials and examination-related information. Curriculum information mainly includes a course syllabus, course content, and basic information about lecturers; teaching arrangement information mainly includes class schedule, experimental and practical activities, and Q&A mode; course study materials mainly include recommended reading materials, reference materials, extracurricular practice cases; examination-related information mainly includes examination time, assessment method description, homework requirements. The disclosure of course information not only reflects the right of students and the public to know about the courses but also is an effective means for the university to accept social supervision, highlight the positioning of the university's level of operation, and maintain and improve the reputation of the university. The disclosure of the content of the graduate program information is shown in Figure 2.

The college, the graduate school and the university's technical department are mainly responsible for releasing graduate course information. Colleges are responsible for the collection of various types of course information in their colleges; the Graduate School is responsible for providing university-wide information on course offerings, course reforms and innovations, as well as investigating overall course design, and the university technology department is responsible for the technical and service support of the course information dissemination platform.

The disclosure of graduate program information is a very valuable work of great significance to all three parties: students, schools and society. With the development and progress of information disclosure technology, the content, level, hierarchy, and updating speed of information disclosure in postgraduate courses have significantly improved, and the characteristics of information disclosure

have become more and more prominent.

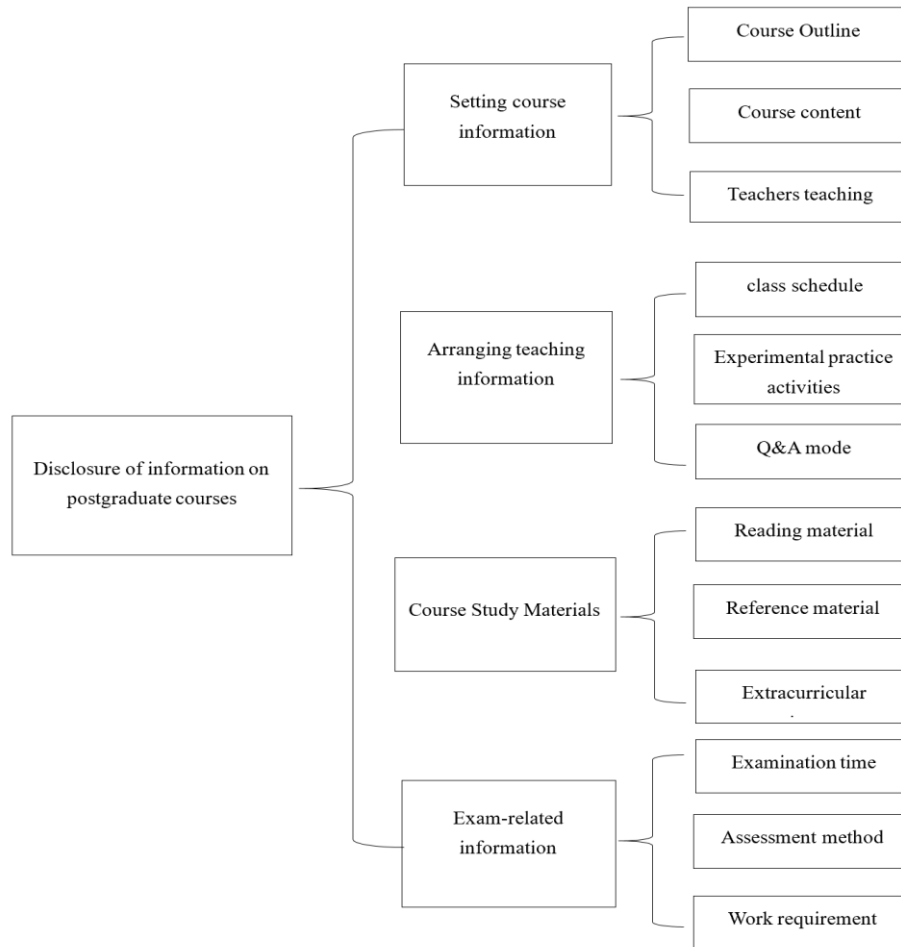


Figure 2: Content of graduate program information disclosure

3.1. The course has a wide range of publicly available information

In general, information about courses offered by graduate students is available on the relevant website pages, and all students and members of the community can take advantage of publicly available course resources to learn and expand their horizons.

3.2. Course evaluations are open and transparent

Graduate students and lecturers can learn the information of student's evaluation of the courses promptly, which facilitates students to determine the elective courses suitable for their learning and urges the lecturers to improve the teaching methods, optimize the contents of the courses, and improve the quality of teaching (Rooney, 2023)[5].

3.3. Course information disclosure provides a platform for teachers to present their work

Due to the richness of the public content and the wide range of public involvement, the disclosure of course information has become a platform for teachers to show the charm of their courses so that they take the initiative to enrich their course information and approach the disclosure of course information with an open mind, seeing it as a way to communicate with other scholars.

3.4. The school values the disclosure of information about the curriculum

Graduate program information disclosure reflects the school's operating characteristics and teaching level, is the quality of graduate education to accept the social supervision of an important window, the school attaches great importance to, proactively promote the public disclosure of information on the curriculum, to improve the school in the postgraduate program side of the construction of the social reputation and impact (Yi et al., 2024)[6].

3.5. Intellectual property rights should protect the disclosure of course information

Although the information content of postgraduate courses is open to society, the purpose is to promote learning and exchange and only allow users to use it for non-commercial educational purposes. Improving the intellectual property protection mechanism can open the course information, continue providing rich learning resources, and promote knowledge sharing.

4. Conclusion

As the basic work of postgraduate course construction, the review of postgraduate course offerings and the disclosure of information are the cornerstones of improving the quality of postgraduate course construction and the important aspect of deepening the reform of postgraduate education. It is of great significance for schools, teachers, students, and society to study and review postgraduate course offerings and the disclosure of information to enrich the connotation of postgraduate course construction, which requires the joint efforts of all parties.

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