

The Exploration of British Multiple Postgraduate Course-Based Programs-Take the School of Education, University of Glasgow as an Example

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ABSTRACT.Based on different learning stage, the postgraduate course-based program at the School of Education, University of Glasgow offers postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma in education and master's degree. This paper conducts a comparative research on the above three learning modes from perspectives of training objectives, admission requirements, teaching demands and career development, in order to explore the inspiration for the master of education in China.

KEYWORDS: Postgraduate course-based program, Master of education, Degree

1. Introduction

As the birthplace of world higher education, the United Kingdom has always been highly celebrated by the international higher education community. In recent years, from a series of government documents such as the famous "Robins Report" and "Dearing Report", the practice in the United Kingdom has shown that the popularization of higher education is accompanied by diversification-diversified program modes, students, backgrounds, and learning approaches. British higher education offers not only standard degree education, but also various non-formal certificate courses and professional diploma education. There are generally three types of certificates for master's studies in British universities: Postgraduate Certificates, Postgraduate Diplomas and Master's Degrees. The granting of different certificates is based on different learning requirements, and is a reflection of the university independently establishing degree programs thanks to the high degree of autonomy. It is generally believed that the course-based (teaching-based) Master's degree equals to the professional degree in China.

In China, the professional master's degree has not been developed for a long time: since 2009 the full-time master in education program has been initiated, lacking necessary experience accumulation and scientific research, therefore in the future, we need to further develop foreign exchanges and cooperation, and fully absorb foreign well-received experience. This paper selects the University of Glasgow in the United Kingdom to conduct a case study, analyzes its three talent training models in master learning stage to conduct a comparative study, so British graduate teaching programs can be directly understood, hopefully providing a reference for the reform and development of the master's education in China.

2. Diversified Postgraduate Program Briefs: School of Education, University of Glasgow

The University of Glasgow was founded in 1451 and is the fourth oldest university in English-speaking countries. The University of Glasgow is internationally renowned for its education and is ranked first in the UK for education majors in the 2019 TIMES ^[1]. The postgraduate education at the University of Glasgow is divided into PGR (Postgraduate research degree) and PGT (Postgraduate taught degree). Course requirements must be met for the course-based degree. The research-based degree has no compulsory course requirements and no formal assessment, but a dissertation must be submitted.

The postgraduate course-based program of the School of Education issues 5 types of study certificates based on different stages of study, namely, Postgraduate Certificate (PgCert), Postgraduate Diploma (PgDip), Postgraduate

Diploma in Education (PGDE), and Master Degree and Doctorate in Education (EdD). The comprehensive decisions are made based on students' independent choice, assessment and different stage of a program; students who pass the assessment can apply to enter the next stage or choose to end the study. The common feature is that they all include various forms like courses, seminars, tutoring, lectures, speeches, etc. This paper selects the teaching programs issuing postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma in education, and teaching-based master degree program for research.

3. Diversified Training Mode of Postgraduate Program: School of Education, University of Glasgow

In order to better understand the programs, the following compares the talent training mode of the School of Education, University of Glasgow in terms of training objectives, admission requirements, teaching requirements and career development.

3.1 Training Objectives

There are different training goals for different training targets. The targets of the postgraduate certificate training are teachers registered with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) or teachers from the University of Glasgow. The main goal of the program, an extension of vocational education to master education, is to enhance those teachers' professional competitiveness. Postgraduate in education diploma targets at secondary and elementary education. These programs are accredited by the Scottish Teaching Society (GTCS) and are designed for students who hope to become teachers in primary and secondary schools. The master's degree is for students who are interested in a certain field, intend to obtain professional qualifications or continue their studies; this degree program trains out professional people who have basic knowledge of certain field, can connect theory with practice, and have critical thinking. Therefore, the training objectives are closely connected with students' future career choices.

3.2 Admission Requirements

For different learning stages, the career or learning background for enrolled students is also different. The admission requirements for the postgraduate certificate are GTCS registered teachers or teachers from the University of Glasgow. Admission requirements for graduate diploma in education must pass the UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) exam and have obtained an undergraduate degree. The middle school program also requires 80 credits of the obtained undergraduate degree to be related to the teaching subjects in the future, of which 40 credits are required to be obtained in the second year of undergraduate and later, and there are more specific requirements for each field. The academic requirements for master's degree are: an undergraduate degree or equivalent (4 projects); a 2.1-level honorary degree or an equivalent level, some of which require degrees in related disciplines, such as education, public policy and equity projects, and require students to have related degrees in education, social sciences, law, and public administration. Higher education teaching programs require recent higher education teaching experience.

3.3 Teaching Requirements

The teaching steps, learning time, credits and assessment approaches are various in different learning stages. The postgraduate certificate generally has only course requirements. In-service learning usually lasts for 2 years with 60 credits. The core courses of the program include: establishing a professional learning group, learning how to be a leader, and improving leadership in learning. Each course includes online teaching and assignments based on students' job.

Postgraduate diploma in education includes courses and practice in primary and secondary schools, full-time study, generally 10 months, and 120 credits completed. The course is 18 weeks in total, and 18 weeks of practice will be carried out in the cooperative elementary and middle schools. The specific arrangement is to first attend class at University of Glasgow for 6 weeks, then practice in elementary and middle schools for 6 weeks, and then return to the University for another 6 weeks. Courses and practice are alternated. The practice of every student can be guaranteed, and the cost of practice is also included in the tuition.

The duration for the course-based master's degree is generally one year, 180 credits completed. Each program clearly proposes the target, purpose, structure, and curriculum, which is mainly based on individual professional experience and interests to deepen and expand the knowledge and understanding of education. The modes include lectures, workshops, group discussions, field trips, or online education, etc., through which the development of critical thinking and the integration of theory with practice by solving practical problems can be promoted. All projects have curriculum requirements, but they are not unified (presented in four modes) in other stages, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Components Comparison Of Course-Based Postgraduate Degree Program

Example of Programs	Program Components
Community Learning and Development	Course + Research Project
Education Research	Course + Thesis
Children Literature and Qualifications	Course + Research Project + Thesis
Museum Education	Course + Field Trip +Research Project+ Thesis

The requirements difference of three certificates can be further checked in Table 2.

Table 2 Different Teaching Requirements of Three Programs

Comparing aspects	Postgraduate Certificate	Postgraduate Diploma in Education	Master's Degree (MED, MSC, IM)
Learning mode	In-service	Full-time	Full-time and in-service
Learning time	Around two years	Ten months	Generally 1-2 years
Credit requirements	60 credits	120 credits	180 credits
Learning content	Course	Course + field trip	Course + others

3.4 Career Development

The differentiation and diversification of career development is obvious. The postgraduate certificate is mainly for the professional development of teachers, to enhance their critical thinking of leadership and management, and to increase their professional competitiveness. The graduate diploma in education trains primary and secondary school teachers and is certified by the Scottish Teachers' Association. Students have professional qualifications upon graduation. This qualification is also a guarantee to employers, parents and students that teachers have reached the national teaching level.

The course-based master's degree program basically supports students' professional development in one's field, including education and psychology. The program is mainly in education, and the classification by position and level also reflects the diversity, as shown in Table 3. In addition to the career expectations shown in Table 3, other destinations include local and national government departments, voluntary agencies, non-governmental organizations, and so on. It is worth mentioning that the professional development of some programs also includes academic research and preparation for doctoral studies.

Table 3 Career Expectations Of Course-Based Postgraduate Degree in Education

Classification	Career Expectation
Education levels	Children education, Primary and secondary school education, college education (majority), Continuing education, Community education etc.
Education Positions	Class advisor, lecturer, policy maker, chief teacher, education managers, researchers etc.

4. Inspirations

4.1 Increase the Dimension of Classified Training

There are many types of postgraduates in education in China, but the dimension of classified training needs to be further extended. At present, the learning modes of the Master of Education are divided into full-time and part-time. In-service also includes rural school teachers, special post teachers and teachers having "free teacher education" to purchase master of education. However, the classified training of master in education has not been effectively implemented. In June 2017, the Vocational Education Expert Group of the National Education Master Teaching Steering Committee conducted a large-scale field survey on the training of masters of education (vocational education) and found that some pilot schools did not organize independent teaching for students from master of education (vocational education), instead they have those students take classes with academic or professional masters in related majors ^[2].

For different types of students, diversified training methods should be adopted. The University of Glasgow does not classify the source of students. Instead, it distinguishes them by granting different learning certificates, offering different learning stages, and the positioning of training goals. When students choose different learning stages, the university correspondingly divides the source of students. At the same time, the programs at the same learning stage are diverse and refined into multiple directions. This kind of personalized training better fits the individual needs of students. We should also adopt different training objectives, admission requirements, learning modes and learning requirements for students with different learning backgrounds and career orientations, clarify the training and training

objectives of different types of talents, strengthen pertinence, and through extensive publicity and training, make the colleges and universities management departments and teachers clear of training goals in master of education and change the concept of talent training.

4.2 Explore the Mode of Theory Paralleling Practice

At present, most schools adopt a linear training mode, which is “theory, practice and dissertation”. Generally, students first learn theoretical knowledge in school, and then enter the practice base or students find internships and write dissertations. Take the 12 colleges and universities under the comprehensive reform of the Master of Education in 2010 as an example, most students’ first study the courses in the school, then go to the practice base to practice and train in stages. For example, Shandong Normal University has “1+1” training mode: the first year of on-campus course learning and practical teaching, the second year of internship and graduation thesis writing; Shaanxi Normal University has “1+0.5+0.5” training mode: One academic year theoretical study, one semester internship and one semester to complete the dissertation.

Corresponding to the linear training mode is the parallel training mode of theory and practice, in which courses and practice are alternately spiraling. The training objects and goals of the postgraduate diploma in education are similar to the full-time master of education in China. Although the length of study is only 10 months, it attaches great importance to professional practice and adopts the form of alternating courses and practice. This mode allows students without work experience quickly familiarize themselves with the workplace and career demands. The combination of theoretical study and practical application, constantly verifying each other; students find questions in practice soon after enrolling, bring the questions and the demand for theoretical knowledge into the higher-level theoretical study. The constant reflections and discussion in alternating practice and theory learning improves the level of scientific research while improving the practical ability. The problems arise from continuous summarization and accumulation found in practice and are realistic problems in education, so they are mostly the topics of the dissertation. Only by combining topic selection of the dissertation with practice, can the application value and timely grasp of the development of the professional field be reflected.

4.3 Increase the Bond between Master of Education and Teachers Career Qualifications

In domestic professional masters, currently only a few professional degrees such as clinical medicine professional degrees have successfully achieved the connection with professional qualifications, while the master of education has no connection with the professional qualifications of teachers. In 2013, the Ministry of Education promulgated the “Interim Measures for the Qualification Examination of Primary and Secondary School Teachers”, which pointed out that the national teacher qualification examination should be a unified national examination^[3]. After graduating with a master's degree in education, the teacher qualification certificate must be taken to obtain the career qualifications in education field.

Professional degrees have a certain career orientation, and how to connect the master's degree in education with teacher qualifications is still under exploration. The master certificate in education of University of Glasgow has been accredited by GTCS and has realized the connection with the professional qualifications of teachers. Founded in 1965, GTCS is one of the earliest education committees in the world. Its main goal is to shape Scotland's teaching career, maintain and improve teachers' professional standards, and contribute to the teaching profession and Scottish education. GTCS has independent standards for new teachers, who can only teach in Scottish public schools if they register with GTCS. This is a statutory requirement for new teachers^[4]. By examining master certificate in education at University of Glasgow and the professional degrees in clinical medicine in China, both programs have connected with career qualification to a certain extent with successful experience. Moreover, both policy orientation and actual needs suggest that Chinese government, industry organizations and other relevant departments play active roles to build a bridge between the master of education and teacher qualifications. A master of education that meets the standard will automatically obtain teacher qualifications, which will reduce the cost of career choices for students, increase the recognition of the master of education by students and the society, and improve the relevance of students’ majors and job, conducive to students’ early career choices and planning.

Acknowledgement

Sincere thanks to the faculty of School of Education at the University of Glasgow for participating in this interview.

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