

# Characteristics and Enlightenment of Outdoor Talents Training in European and American Universities

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## ABSTRACT

In order to examine the characteristics of outdoor professional personnel training in European and American countries and provide reference for outdoor professional personnel training in China. In this study, the literature method and logical analysis were used to analyze the training programs and practices of outdoor professional talents in 17 universities in 6 countries, including the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom, and explore the characteristics of outdoor professional talents training in European and American countries. The results show that: 1) According to the characteristics and advantages of their own disciplines, each school will include outdoor sports, education, management, tourism and other professional categories; 2) Take social development as the center, pay attention to the cultivation of professional ability, professionalism, professional ethics and environmental literacy; 3) According to the professional quality of talents to develop a scientific curriculum system in line with outdoor characteristics and laws; 4) The establishment of a sound cooperative training mechanism between universities and social outdoor institutions, which provides conditions for improving students' outdoor leadership, environmental awareness and other aspects; 5) Promote students' professional ability and practical experience through various and multi-level vocational qualification training and certification. It has reference significance for optimizing the training system of outdoor professionals in China, improving the quality of training, meeting social needs, and promoting the development of the industry.

**Keywords:** *Outdoor; Outdoor Major; Higher Education; Characteristics*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The training of outdoor professionals in China has been developing for nearly 20 years, and the trained professionals have played a huge role in promoting the development of outdoor sports in China. Under the background of the new era, outdoor sports have become an important way and effective carrier of China's social and economic transformation, improving the quality of life, promoting the physical and mental development of young people, enriching the practice of education.

However, along with outdoor sports in our country play a role in different fields and the development of in-depth, presents and industry demand for outdoor talents development target corresponds to the special demand, domestic research shows that our country outdoor professionals vocational ability insufficiency, the narrow knowledge, lack of experience, such problems as lack of competence increasingly apparent. This reflects the practical contradiction between outdoor professionals' ability and market demand, which leads to the low employment rate of outdoor professionals in this field, resulting in "structural unemployment" and other problems.

European and American countries have a long history of outdoor sports. It is of positive guiding significance for the reform and development of outdoor professional personnel training in China to examine and learn from the ability and quality of outdoor professionals in European and American countries, fully explore the elements of the ability and quality of outdoor professionals, and learn from the experience of outdoor professional development in European and American countries.

## 2. SERVING THE REALISTIC NEEDS OF THE SOCIETY, PROFESSIONAL SETTINGS ARE DIVERSIFIED

### 2.1. The specialty setting accords with the national industrial environment

The setting of outdoor majors in European and American countries is closely related to the development of their outdoor industries, and each country has set up outdoor majors according to its own industrial environment. The leisure sports industry develops rapidly in Britain. The government devolves the authority of leisure sports management to the local government, which directly leads

to the diversification of sports leisure entertainment forms. There are many state and national parks in the United States, which play an important role in meeting the needs of residents for leisure and recreation. The major of outdoor leisure management in the United States mainly focuses on parks and tourism. Some universities offer a wide range of majors such as leisure management,

adventure leadership and outdoor education. By summarizing the outdoor majors set up in 17 universities in six countries, including the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom, they are divided into three categories: leisure tourism management, adventure leadership and outdoor education (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Examples of outdoor majors in 17 European and American universities

Classification	Major	University	Nation	College	Degree type
Leisure tourism management	Outdoor leisure	Lake Head University	Canada	Humanities and Social Sciences	Bachelor of Arts
	Outdoor leisure management	Penn State University	America	Health and Human Development	Bachelor of Science
Adventure leadership	Outdoor leadership	Columbia University	UK	Natural Resources and outdoor research	Bachelor of Arts
	Outdoor adventure leader	Lawrence University	Canada	Health College	Bachelor of Arts
	Outdoor education	Columbia University	UK	Natural Resources and outdoor research	Bachelor of Arts
Outdoor education	Outdoor education	University of Label	Australia	Education	Bachelor of Arts

## 2.2. Outdoor majors are widely involved in sports, education, management, tourism and other fields

From the open outdoor professional college, leisure tourism management classes and class expedition leader professional open in humanities and social science, generally, adventure sports and health research institute, this is involved with outdoor professional corresponds to the multi-disciplinary field **and** focus on sports and outdoor education engineering college of education, embodies the outdoor education and sports education connected. From the perspective of degree types, the majors of leisure tourism management and Adventure leadership are widely set up with **Bachelor of Arts** and Bachelor of Science, while the majors of outdoor education are generally subordinate to education, so they are mainly set as Bachelor of Arts.

## 3. THE TRAINING TARGET REFLECTS THE PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS, AND THE ABILITY REQUIREMENTS MEET THE NEEDS OF THE TIMES

### 3.1. The target is outdoor occupational complex environment

Outdoor occupations mainly rely on outdoor sports and belong to the service industry. They need to face complex and changeable natural environment and customers of all

ages and backgrounds in their work. Training objectives fully reflect this feature, including knowledge, skills, experience and other aspects. For example, the training objectives of Cologne Sports University are divided into professional knowledge, method ability, social accomplishment and human resource ability. Idaho State University divides its training objectives into outdoor education and outdoor professional business. On the one hand, the objectives of each school include the knowledge ability and quality required for outdoor work, and on the other hand, the basic thinking, information processing, problem solving and other abilities within the academic framework, reflecting the pertinence of the training objectives of outdoor specialty.

### 3.2. The classification target highlights the specialty differentiation

There are differences in the service fields of leisure tourism management, adventure leadership and outdoor education, leading to different training objectives of the three majors. Leisure tourism management majors attach great importance to project design and organization, highlighting tourism and management-related theories. For example, in the training goal of leisure sports major of Cologne Sport University, "enabling students to flexibly apply sports management and marketing theories and sports association policies"; Adventure leadership majors emphasize professional safety practice skills. For example, "focus on developing skills and knowledge needed for safe and effective leadership and guidance" is the training objective of outdoor Adventure Leadership and Management major in University of Worcester. Outdoor

education majors focus on teaching and guidance skills; details in the Table 2.

**Table 2.** Example es of training objectives for classified majors

Classification	Major	Training objective
Leisure tourism management	Leisure sports	Enable students to understand and evaluate outdoor sports and sports tourism, master the principles, methods and project characteristics of outdoor sports, improve sports skills. Develop the ability to reflect and migrate, design and organize sports tourism projects, develop communication, group leadership and self-presentation skills.
Adventure leadership	Outdoor adventure leader	Develop an understanding of theory, practice and contemporary issues in adventure sports and outdoor leadership. Develop academic understanding, translate theoretical concepts into practical skills, and gain highly specialized skills, knowledge and experience.
Outdoor education	Sustainable development and outdoor education	Deepen students' problems of contemporary society and culture, geography and sustainable development as well as the understanding of the outdoor education, guide the students to think about the environmental impact of human society, sports, geography, environmental science, leadership and safety aspects of knowledge and skills, training students' teaching skills, to guide others to participate in and respect for outdoor environment.

#### 4. ABILITY AND QUALITY REQUIREMENTS TO SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AS THE CENTER, IN LINE WITH OUTDOOR CHARACTERISTICS AND LAWS

Outdoor talent training in European and American countries started earlier, and the requirements for comprehensive ability are increasingly comprehensive in the constant update and change. Priest (1987) [1] summarized previous research and identified 14 core competencies that outdoor leaders should possess, and Manfield and Pearse (1998)[2] divided these 14 core competencies into three parts: 1) technical skills, 2) people skills, and 3) general skills. It also points out that it should be based on the development of technical skills. Other studies have found the downside of focusing narrowly on vocational skills, overemphasizing technical skills at the expense of skills within and between individuals[3]. There is a new emphasis on broader competencies such as interpersonal skills, critical thinking, reflective skills, information technology, and the ability to work in cross-disciplinary teams. At the same time, the researchers found that universities' heavy focus on research, disconnected from the real business world, could leave graduates ill-prepared for employment[4]. Through summarizing the requirements of cultivating outdoor talents in 17 colleges and universities, the following common requirements are summarized.

##### ***4.1. Multidisciplinary knowledge system derived from the concept and connotation of outdoor sports***

The concept of outdoor sports can be understood from the perspectives of exploration, competition, ecology and leisure, which contains a wide range of basic connotations of natural science, ecological science, human geography and other disciplines. As a result, the knowledge system of outdoor professionals involves many fields such as sports, education, economy and nature. It includes not only the knowledge of humanities and social sciences such as physical education, education and management, but also the knowledge of natural sciences such as geography and biology. The knowledge of management and physical education is the common knowledge objective of every school, and the knowledge of pedagogy, sociology, art and other disciplines are presented in the knowledge objective.

##### ***4.2. Based on outdoor sports skills, emphasis is placed on outdoor leadership, risk management and teaching organization***

Outdoor sports skills are the basic ability of outdoor professionals[7], 16 universities are focused on the training of outdoor specific skills. Secondly, outdoor leadership is emphasized, followed by communication, organization and risk management. Due to differences in training direction, the outdoor education pays more attention to teaching, the cultivation of the ability of organization and motor skill mastery, pay more attention to leisure management class specialized all-round controls the outdoor activities such as planning, organization, implementation, security capabilities, the specific competencies help to meet the needs of students' career development. However, both

directions are based on outdoor sports technology, which can not only be used as the teaching content or means of physical education majors, but also as the security guarantee for leisure tourism management majors to provide services. At the same time, schools encourage students to participate in vocational qualification training and certification to enhance professional competence and accumulate practical experience, to build a bridge between professional and vocational. The market is now more oriented towards a wide range of comprehensive abilities rather than just vocational skills[4], so the requirements for outdoor professions are becoming more extensive.

### **4.3. Highlight environmental awareness and professionalism**

In the strong call of global resources and environmental protection, protecting the natural environment and establishing a harmonious relationship with nature become more and more important in the outdoor industry[6]. Eleven colleges and universities emphasize the development of environmental literacy. They actively guide students to think about the relationship between man and nature, pursue the harmonious coexistence between man and nature, and infiltrate environmental concepts into theoretical and practical courses, thus subtly influencing the formation of students' environmental literacy. Professionalism is a quality developed on the basis of professional skills, which has a great impact on the career of professionals. In addition, each school also attaches importance to the cultivation of professional ethics, innovation consciousness and self-awareness, and the common development of these qualities is conducive to students in the future work to establish a good professional faith and moral level.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND ENLIGHTENMENT**

Outdoor majors in Europe and the United States are based on the domestic industrial environment, social needs and the characteristics and advantages of colleges and universities to extensively train outdoor professionals in sports, education, management, tourism and other fields. The training objectives take social development as the center, pay attention to the cultivation of professional ability, professionalism, professional ethics and environmental literacy, and the professional objectives fully highlight the differences between different outdoor majors. In terms of ability and quality requirements, based on the multidisciplinary knowledge system and according to the professional quality of talents, a scientific curriculum system with outdoor characteristics and rules is formulated. Emphasis is placed on students' mastery of outdoor sports skills and accumulation of practical experience, and the fit between practical ability and

professional ability is emphasized, encourage vocational training and certification. It has established a sound cooperative training mechanism between universities and social outdoor institutions, providing conditions for improving students' outdoor leadership, environmental awareness and other aspects.

Enlightenment: 1) Fully insight into the change of social needs, timely update or adjust the professional positioning of outdoor professional personnel training; 2) Adhere to the concept of professional outdoor education for the workplace, enhance the pertinence of training objectives for specific jobs, accurately grasp the ability and quality requirements of outdoor professionals, focus on cultivating "generalists" who can fully reflect the label of outdoor industry, and alleviate the problem of "structural unemployment" of outdoor professionals; 3) The training target is transformed from knowledge, skills and ability development to "professional concept, personality building, knowledge inquiry and capacity building". Pay attention to the interdisciplinary knowledge base of outdoor professionals, pay attention to the transmission of professional ideas and spirit while cultivating a wide range of professional abilities, and promote the development of students' good personality traits and professional ethics; 4) Accelerate the construction of a joint training mechanism between universities and enterprises to provide better conditions for outdoor professionals to enhance their ability and accumulate experience.

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