

Analysis on Curriculum Setting of Undergraduate Specialty of Financial Management in Application-oriented Institutions

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Abstract: This paper makes an analysis based on the current situation of curriculum setting of undergraduate specialty of financial management in application-oriented institutions, proposes the principle of “profound foundation, wide caliber, strong ability and high quality” in combination with the specialty positioning and objective of talent training, and scientifically and reasonably sets the “platform+module” curriculum system so as to cultivate applied talents meeting the local market need.

Introduction

In Article III of Chapter I General rules in Administrative Provisions on Undergraduate Specialty Setting in General Institutes of Higher Education issued in September 2012, the Ministry of Education explicitly put forward: “Specialty setting and adjustment in colleges shall actively adapt to the need of national and regional economic and social development, adapt to the needs of knowledge innovation, scientific and technological progress and disciplinary development, and better meet the masses’ need of receiving high-quality higher education; besides, it shall follow the law of higher education and law of talent growth, comply with a college’s school-running orientation and conditions, optimize the disciplinary specialty structure, promote a college to have its characteristics and enhance the talent cultivation quality.” For this reason, the undergraduate financial management specialty usually provided by application-oriented institutions shall abide by relevant provisions by the Ministry of Education and the requirements of Introduction to Undergraduate Specialties in General Institutes of Higher Education, fully analyze the current situation of curriculum system, and combine its own positioning for applied talent cultivation so as to satisfy and serve the local market’s need for talents.

Current Situation of Curriculum Setting of Undergraduate Specialty of Financial Management in Application-Oriented Institutions

At present, the following three aspects have been concluded after the analysis on the current situation of curriculum setting of undergraduate specialty of financial management in application-oriented institutions in China.

Lack of specialty features in curriculum setting. The undergraduate specialty of financial management^① aims to cultivate students to meet the need of modern market economy so that students can

^①Department of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education of P.R.C. Introduction to contents and specialties of undergraduate specialties in general institutes of higher education (2012) [M]. Beijing: Higher Education Press, 2012:328.

have the humanistic spirit, scientific literacy, honesty as well as knowledge and abilities concerning economy, law and financial management etc.; besides, this specialty also cultivates students to learn basic theories and knowledge about financial management, receive basic trainings related to financial management methods and skills and have the basic ability to analyze and solve financial issues.

Although the cultivation of applied talents have been proposed in the talent cultivation schemes (plans) of financial management specialty in application-oriented institutions, it is very difficult to show the features of undergraduate specialty of financial management in curriculum setting.^[1] Firstly, the curriculum setting is inclined to the accounting specialty so most courses are dominated by those required by accounting specialty; courses related to the undergraduate specialty of financial management are mainly the (Science of) Financial Management (or divided into primary and intermediate), (Science of) Advanced Financial Management provided by a few of colleges and other specialized courses. Thus, there is no corresponding course, which refines and goes deep into the undergraduate specialty of financial management, to support the basic knowledge and skills of the specialty. Secondly, the curriculum setting is inclined to the financial specialty and emphasizes the relevant curriculum of finance involving securities investment instead of the content required by the specialty of financial management.^[2] Thus, this is why most application-oriented institutions don't provide accounting, finance and undergraduate specialty of financial management simultaneously.

Lack of systematicness and standardization in curriculum setting. As for the curriculum setting of undergraduate specialty of financial management in application-oriented institutions, on the one hand, it fails to completely realize the easy-to-difficult and step-by-step effect of cohesion from theories to practices in time and content; on the other hand, the teaching program corresponding to the curriculum excessively emphasizes theoretical content and has relatively low requirements for practice course. However, the "applied" talent cultivation cannot be limited in classroom and theories but more need to be strengthened in the practice course.

Confusing names in curriculum setting. According to the investigation and analysis on the talent cultivation schemes (plans) of undergraduate specialties of financial management provided by 41 domestic application-oriented institutions, a course has different names at all institutions. For instance, Financial Management, the specialized core course, has the course names such as "financial management", "science of financial management", "finance" and "corporate finance".

Suggestions on Perfection of Curriculum Setting of Undergraduate Specialty of Financial Management in Application-Oriented Institutions

Based on the current situation of curriculum setting of undergraduate specialty of financial management in application-oriented institutions, in combination with the objective of applied talent cultivation in the positioning of such institutions, it is required to follow the principle of "profound foundation, wide caliber, strong ability and high quality" to scientifically and reasonably set the "platform+ module" curriculum system during specific setting and adjustment of undergraduate specialty of financial management. Therefore, the application-oriented institutions should divide the curriculum structure system related to talent cultivation schemes (plans) into public basic course, specialized educational course and other platforms and corresponding modules based on their respective conditions and the practical talent needs of regional markets. Besides, each platform (or module) is composed of some curriculum groups, which are constituted in accordance with the same or similar disciplines.

Public basic course platform . Like other specialties, the curriculum setting of undergraduate specialty of financial management in application-oriented institutions must comply with that “the task of higher education is to cultivate advanced professionals with the spirit of innovation and practical ability, develop scientific and technological culture and promote the construction of socialist modernization” proposed in the Law of Higher Education. For this reason, the public basic course platform must include the modules, which are respectively ideology, politics and education module and common basic course module. In addition, corresponding courses involved in each module should be gradually learned profoundly during the cultivation period so that they can become the foundations of each module on the specialized educational platform and can combine and interact with each other organically.

Ideology, politics and education module. The cultivation requirement and objective of the module are mainly to realize students’ correct world view, life view, physical and psychological health as well as good ideology and morality. This module mainly includes military affairs, military theories, safety education, ideological and moral cultivation and basic law education, basic principle of Marxism, Outline of Chinese Modern History, Mao Zedong thought, introduction to socialist theory system with Chinese characteristics, situation and policy, career planning, moral education practice, health education, PE, psychological health education and other courses.

Common basic course module. The common basic course module provides the learning foundation for the educational platform of undergraduate specialty of financial management. Specifically, it generally includes Chinese (mainly referring to the financial practical writing), English, advanced mathematics (such as calculus, mathematical statistics, probability theory and linear algebra), computer and other courses.

Specialized educational course platform. The emphasis of curriculum setting of undergraduate specialty of financial management in application-oriented institutions should be manifested in not only the public basic course content learning but also foundation learning. It should changes from easy to difficult and embodies the gradual deepening of basic knowledge and skills in time. Thus, the curriculum setting needs to be carried out step by step in time. Based on the time order and gradual deepening of content, this platform can be divided into the disciplinary basic course module, specialized required course module, specialized-direction elective course module and specialized practice course module. Among those modules, the specialized practice course module^[3] usually runs through the former three modules in time and involves the practice courses provided after corresponding theoretical knowledge courses.

Disciplinary basic course module. As for application-oriented institutions, they should use economics and finance as theoretical basis, accounting as the commercial language and management as the tool or means to build a curriculum system targeting the practice needs in accordance with the introduction to the undergraduate specialty of financial management by the Ministry of Education.^[4] Therefore, the disciplinary basic course module should cover economics, finance, accounting, management and other courses related to the undergraduate specialty of financial management.

- (1) Courses concerning economics mainly include microeconomics and macroeconomics.
- (2) Finance-related courses mainly include finance, monetary banking, operation and management of commercial banks etc.
- (3) Accounting-related courses mainly include basic accounting, financial regulations and professional ethnics, accounting computerization and tax law etc.
- (4) Management-related disciplinary basic courses mainly include the principle of management, corporate strategy, management information system and marketing etc.

The above curriculum setting can help expand the scope of knowledge of the specialty and lay a wide specialized foundation for the setting of specialized required course, direction elective course and practice course.

Specialized required course module. The specialized required course is the key to differentiate the undergraduate specialty of financial management and other specialties and the basic content of specialized educational course platform. Its setting aims to systematically introduce the knowledge of undergraduate specialty of financial management.

In order to comprehensively and deeply reflect the undergraduate specialty of financial management, the application-oriented institutions should mainly provide financial accounting, management accounting (including cost accounting), financial management (or corporate financial affairs and corporate finance)^[5], capital market (or financial market), financial analysis, theory of investment, specialized English and other major core courses.

Specialized-direction elective course module. The specialized-direction elective course module is provided to enlarge the scope of specialized knowledge, improve knowledge structure, expand specialized horizon, cultivate innovation ability and adapt to the need of talent flow and occupation choice.^[6] The undergraduate application-oriented institutions should set their applicable application-oriented elective module based on specific practical conditions and regional market needs.

The module mainly meets the need to cultivate talents who can get engaged in practical affairs and the specific curriculum setting can be designed according to the present practice direction on the market.^[7] For instance, if it is hoped that the talents cultivated can get engaged in accounting, auditing and other related occupations, the courses such as advanced financial accounting, auditing, assets appraisal, consulting and visa service and internal control can be provided;^[8] if it is hoped that the talents can get engaged in finance-related occupations, the courses such as investment banks, credit risk management, securities market and securities investment analysis can be provided.

Specialized practice course module. The setting of specialized practice course must be conducted after the public basic course, corresponding disciplinary basic course and specialized required course are provided. This module, which mainly aims to combines theories with practices to achieve applying those learned, specifically includes specialized skill training, specialized comprehensive skill training and off-campus internship.

(1) Specialized skills training. This part will provide awareness (or manual account-making) training, financial accounting training, comprehensive financial management training, cost accounting training, tax training and auditing training etc., which should be arranged after the courses such as basic accounting, financial accounting, management accounting (including cost accounting), tax law and auditing are provided.

(2) Specialized comprehensive skill training. This part should provide the comprehensive manual accounting business training, accounting computerization, ERP simulated training^[9] and graduation design, which should be provided after financial accounting and all specialized core courses^[10].

(3) Off-campus internship. The off-campus internship course shall be arranged after all the above-mentioned modules. The effective implementation of the content in this part needs the university-enterprise cooperation and the establishment of an internship base.

In the above-mentioned “platform + module” curriculum system setting of undergraduate specialty of financial management in application-oriented institutions, the specialized cultivation of “profound foundation” should be laid through the establishment of public basic platform, and aims to cultivate talents who have comprehensive qualities. The educational course platform for the undergraduate

specialty of financial management expands the specialized knowledge, cultivates talents' key abilities, meanwhile, highlights the specialty's academic and practice features, and forms the principle of "wide caliber, strong ability and high quality". The specialized-direction elective course setting satisfies the special requirements proposed due to the differences in learning ability, learning interest, learning method and career design during the talent cultivation process, and provides a vast space for talents' self-design and individualized development.

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