

Original Paper

Research on the Training and Improvement Path of Insurance Master's Degree Students from the Perspective of Industry Education Integration

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Abstract

With the high-quality transformation and development of the insurance industry and the continuous promotion of regulatory reform in the insurance industry, as the core force for the development of the insurance industry, the quality of training for insurance master's degree talents is directly related to the sustainable development of the industry. The integration of industry and education, as a new type of education model, aims to promote the deep integration of education and industry, and provide strong support for the cultivation of insurance professionals. However, currently in the process of cultivating insurance professional master's talents, there are problems such as unclear training objectives, single curriculum design, lack of substantive practical aspects, and weak teaching staff, this article is based on the perspective of integration of industry and education, and explores in depth the ways to enhance the training of insurance professional and master's talents. It is suggested that measures such as clarifying the training objectives of professional master's degree, improving the quality of teachers, focusing on curriculum design, and meeting the needs of enterprises should be taken, which provide useful reference for the innovation and development of insurance professional master's degree talent training and promote the sustainable and healthy development of the insurance industry.

Keywords

integration of industry and education, master's degree in insurance, talent cultivation, improvement pathways

1. Introduction

The integration of production and education provides a new way to train high-quality talents. In recent years, documents such as Opinions on Accelerating the Reform and Development of Graduate

Education in the New Era and the Development Plan for Professional Degree Graduate Education (2020-2025) have proposed that the integration mechanism of production and education should be effectively implemented and the quality of professional master training should be continuously improved. Universities around the country actively explore the integration model of production and education, and relevant scholars also discuss how to implement the integration of production and education to enable high-quality training of professional degree students. The integration model of industry and education can promote the cooperation between universities and enterprises to cultivate applied talents. On the one hand, universities set the curriculum system of professional degree postgraduates according to the needs of enterprise development, which solves the problem of intellectual support for talents in the development of enterprises. On the other hand, enterprises provide internship conditions and practical work experience for professional masters to promote students to apply theoretical knowledge into practice (Tan et al., 2023), but at present, the integration of industry and education still faces some problems in promoting the quality of postgraduate education. For example, the lack of joint efforts for multi-subject collaborative promotion, the imperfect postgraduate curriculum system, and the lack of top-level government design (Wang, 2022; Ren et al., 2023; Bai, 2019). A scholar takes the exploration practice of local colleges and universities as an example, it is suggested to improve the innovation ability and practical ability of professional master students by building a joint graduate training system, building a team of high-quality tutors, and conducting scientific and effective management of the quality of professional degree students (Guo et al., 2023). A scholar also believes that it is necessary to further analyze and discuss whether the problems faced by the integration of production and education in training graduate students are universal in different universities (Liang et al., 2023). Therefore, it is necessary to explore the effective path of integration of production and education in training graduate students based on the characteristics of different specialties in different regions. According to the China National Master of Insurance Education Supervisory Committee shows that since the new insurance master's degree in China in 2010, as of 2021, a total of 52 colleges and universities in the country recruit insurance professional master's degree graduates (hereinafter referred to as insurance professional master), of which the professional master's training system has not yet developed mature, still need to be further explored. In the early stage of the training of insurance master's talents, the main problems are small enrollment scale and the quality of students to be improved (Yao, 2014). With the vigorous development of the digital economy, the increasing aging of the population, and the continuous advancement of the insurance regulatory reform, the major problems in the talent training of the insurance industry have changed (Ren, 2021), such as unclear training goals, weak teachers, single curriculum and lack of substantive practice. In the training process of insurance professional master, promoting the integration of industry and education can not only train practical talents for the development of enterprises, but also provide students with more opportunities to understand the specific work content, and provide new ideas for the combination of theoretical research and practical application of insurance discipline, so as to promote the

development of the discipline. Therefore, it is necessary to add the new education model of integration of production and education into the training system of insurance professional master talents.

2. The Current Problems in the Training Mode of Insurance Master's and Professional Talents

2.1 Training Objectives Are not Clear, Professional Characteristics Are not Prominent Enough

Firstly, the phenomenon of homogenization in the development of academic and professional degrees has led to insufficient clarity in the training objectives of insurance professional master's degree programs. Specifically, academic insurance master's degrees aim to cultivate high-level insurance professionals with profound theoretical literacy, and provide theoretical guidance for exploring the internal laws and development trends of the insurance industry, as well as the characteristics and design principles of insurance products. The goal of insurance master's education is to cultivate insurance professionals with strong practical abilities, providing practical talents to improve the risk prevention and control capabilities and service quality of insurance companies. However, in the process assessment, there is often no significant difference in the assessment methods, standards, and content between the two, which cannot fully reflect the advantages of professional master's students in terms of application ability; Meanwhile, in terms of graduation requirements, there is often no significant difference in the graduation thesis or project between the two, and sometimes there may even be situations where professional master's students imitate academic master's students in their research. Secondly, the homogenization of professional fields within the insurance master's program is quite severe, lacking professional characteristics. For example, in the actual teaching process, many local universities have set too broad research directions, lacking clear goals and priorities. Although some local universities divide the research directions of insurance master's programs into personal insurance, property insurance, risk management, insurance fund utilization, etc., in the specific teaching process, these directions lack clear definition and differentiation, and the ambiguity of research directions leads to students being unable to deeply understand and master professional knowledge in a specific field; At the same time, in terms of disciplinary direction, universities in the central and western regions tend to overlook the economic development characteristics of their respective regions and tend to simply imitate those in developed regions. They do not explore professional characteristics based on regional development characteristics, making it difficult for students to form professional depth in the research process, resulting in a lack of core competitiveness among graduates.

2.2 The Teaching Staff Is Weak, and the Off-Campus Industry Tutor System Is not Perfect

At present, there are some shortcomings in the teaching staff of insurance master's programs, which cannot fully meet the training needs. At present, the implementation of the "dual mentor system" in the insurance master's training institute needs further improvement. Regarding on campus mentors, in recent years, many of the teaching talents introduced by universities belong to the academic type. They have rich academic backgrounds and solid theoretical knowledge, but they do not pay enough attention to practical issues such as the operation of different insurance products and contract dispute resolution.

This will to some extent affect the mastery of specific practical knowledge by insurance master's students. For example, in insurance related courses, academic teachers may focus more on explaining theoretical aspects such as insurance contract terms and rate calculations, while lacking practical experience and case studies on how to handle insurance claims, insurance fraud identification, and other practical problems. This teaching model can lead to students being unable to quickly adapt and solve problems encountered in practical work. Meanwhile, as a segmented field, insurance has seen an increasing demand for professional teachers with the expansion of enrollment. However, the current number of teachers with insurance professional backgrounds cannot meet the practical needs. Regarding off campus mentors, the cultivation of insurance master's and professional talents also faces difficulties. On the one hand, although they can make up for the lack of on campus mentors in terms of knowledge structure, off campus mentors are mostly the backbone of their work units. For the graduate students they guide, they lack sufficient time and energy for practical theoretical teaching, and can only provide limited guidance in the specific internship process. On the other hand, due to the long-term practical work of off campus mentors, they often lack a systematic knowledge system, making it difficult to combine insurance theory knowledge with practical knowledge to teach graduate students.

2.3 The Curriculum Is Simple, Lack of Compound Talent Training System

Diversified and scientific curriculum can improve the quality of graduate education. The curriculum for insurance master's degree programs should meet the market demand for professional talent's abilities and qualities in the insurance industry. At present, insurance master's programs in various universities mainly face problems such as repetitive course content, unreasonable course structure, and monotonous classroom teaching methods. Specifically, first of all, some course content overlaps with undergraduate teaching content. Insurance specialized master's education is a further extension of undergraduate education, while some colleges and universities ignore the level differences between undergraduate and graduate education in their curriculum, and only teach the same content in different textbook versions; Secondly, the structure of course categories needs to be improved, especially in the field of case teaching. Currently, the insufficient accumulation of cases in graduate education for insurance majors is a common problem. The lack of cases directly leads to a shortage of such course arrangements. Furthermore, some training units tend to set courses according to individual needs and timing, which to some extent limits the rationality of course arrangements; At the same time, the classroom teaching method is single. Currently, the education of insurance master's degree is still mainly based on traditional education models. Traditional education models usually use a single teaching method, only imparting theoretical knowledge through textbooks, ignoring the cultivation of innovative thinking for students to solve problems in practical work. Taking insurance technology courses as an example, due to the wide and rapid development of insurance technology fields, traditional insurance technology courses may not cover all important content. For example, in emerging technologies such as big data, artificial intelligence, and blockchain, most universities currently only use traditional teaching methods

such as classroom lectures and literature reading. Students can only understand the basic concepts and principles of insurance technology, but lack opportunities for practical operation and experience.

2.4 Lack of Substance in the Practical Process and Insufficient Interaction with the Insurance Industry

Cultivating high-quality insurance professional master's talents not only requires students to learn basic theoretical knowledge related to insurance in school, but also requires them to enter real work scenarios for practice. At present, most insurance master's students in universities face some challenges in their internship practice, mainly including inadequate policy implementation, limited and low-quality internship opportunities, and insufficient awareness of the importance of internships among students. Firstly, the implementation of policies such as deep integration between schools and enterprises is not sufficient, mainly due to differences in cooperation concepts between schools and enterprises. Schools pay more attention to talent cultivation and academic research, while enterprises pay more attention to market efficiency and business expansion, which leads to difficulties in finding common entry points during the cooperation process and hinders in-depth cooperation between schools and enterprises; Secondly, there are few internship opportunities for students and the quality is not high, mainly manifested in the diverse and complex business types of insurance companies, as well as fierce competition in the industry. Most insurance companies adopt a more cautious attitude towards accepting interns and tend to assign them some low professional requirements work tasks; At the same time, the connection between schools and the insurance industry is not close enough, and there is a lack of effective information exchange and cooperation mechanisms. This makes it difficult for schools to understand the actual needs of insurance companies and to provide students with more internship opportunities. In addition, some students have insufficient awareness of the importance of internship practice and lack the motivation to actively seek internship opportunities. For example, some insurance master's students, when choosing internship opportunities, place too much emphasis on the reputation and scale of the internship institution, and overlook the opportunities to truly learn something during the internship. Some students are more willing to choose internship positions in large insurance companies or well-known financial institutions, but in large institutions, due to the large number of personnel and clear division of labor, they can only engage in some very basic work and cannot have a deep understanding of the entire insurance business process or access to core business content.

3. The Mechanism of Industry-Education Integration Supporting the Cultivation of Insurance Master's Talents

3.1 Cultivate Practical Talents for Enterprise Development and Enhance Market Competitiveness

The integration of industry and education closely integrates training units with the development of the insurance industry, and the insurance master's talents trained under this model are more in line with the actual needs of the insurance industry. Through this model, on the one hand, after establishing a deep cooperative relationship with financial institutions such as insurance companies, schools can more accurately understand the needs and talent gaps of insurance companies, adjust educational content and

methods, and ensure that what students learn matches market demand. This cooperative model makes school education more practical, improving the pertinence and practicality of education. On the other hand, insurance companies and other related enterprises can receive more talent support, and cooperation between schools and insurance companies can help the insurance industry achieve technological upgrading and product innovation, thereby improving market competitiveness. At the same time, through the integration of industry and education, insurance companies establish a complete talent pool through continuous project cooperation and talent cultivation activities with schools, and use the resources and platforms of schools to select and cultivate talents. This cooperation model is conducive to enterprises finding suitable talents more efficiently and improving the adaptability of insurance master's graduates to job positions.

3.2 Provide Students with More Internship Opportunities and Practical Training Resources to Enhance Their Employability

The integration of industry and education provides students with more internship opportunities, allowing them to exercise their skills in practical work environments and improve their ability to solve practical problems. Through internships, students can gain a deeper understanding of the operational models, business processes, and market demands of the insurance industry, thereby enhancing their practical abilities. This practical experience can help students better adapt to future work environments and improve their competitiveness in employment. For example, during the internship, students can be exposed to real insurance business cases, understand the characteristics and market demands of insurance products, and learn how to analyze customer needs, develop insurance plans, handle insurance accidents, etc. in practice, thereby improving their professional skills and practical abilities in handling insurance related business. The integration of industry and education not only provides students with internship opportunities and training resources, but also builds a platform for their career development. Through communication and learning with industry experts and mentors, students can establish their own career network, understand the development trends and opportunities of the industry, which will help students clarify their career development direction and improve their employment competitiveness.

3.3 Provide New Ideas for the Integration of Theoretical Research and Practical Application in the Field of Insurance, and Promote the Development of the Discipline

The insurance discipline is a highly applied discipline, where theoretical research and practical application are interdependent. The integration of industry and education can effectively promote the integration of theory and practice, providing new ideas for the development of the insurance discipline. The integration of industry and education has built a bridge for academic exchange and industrial cooperation in the field of insurance. The communication and cooperation between academia and industry are important driving forces for the development of the insurance discipline. The integration of industry and education enables academic researchers to have a deeper understanding of the actual operation and business needs of insurance companies, thereby providing more specific guidance for

their theoretical research. At the same time, insurance companies and other enterprises can also share the problems and challenges they encounter in their actual business through the industry education integration platform, and provide real research cases and data support for their sharing in the process of cooperation and communication with schools. This two-way communication and cooperation helps the theoretical research of the insurance discipline to be closer to practice, promoting innovation and development of the discipline. At the same time, the integration of industry and education can also promote innovation in research methods in the insurance discipline. Traditional research methods in the insurance industry often focus on theoretical derivation and model construction, lacking in-depth exploration of practical problems. The integration of industry and education enables schools to have a more direct exposure to practical problems in the insurance industry, guiding researchers to adopt more specific case study methods to explore the phenomena and development laws of the insurance industry. The innovation of this research method helps the theoretical research of the insurance discipline to be closer to practice, improve the pertinence and practicality of research results, and further promote the development of the discipline.

4. The Specific Path of Integrating Industry and Education to Support the Cultivation of Insurance Professional and Master's Talents

4.1 Deepen the Reform of the Evaluation System for Insurance Professional Master's Education Guided by Clear Objectives for Professional Master's Education

To cultivate high-quality insurance professionals, it is necessary to deeply reform the education evaluation system. The practicality and career orientation of insurance professional master's education can be improved through the following measures: firstly, schools should have a deep understanding of the market demand in the insurance industry, and through on-site research and communication with industry experts, clarify the specific requirements of the market for insurance professional master's talents. On this basis, the characteristics and advantages of insurance master's education can be further clarified, with a focus on more specific professional fields such as risk management, actuarial science, and insurance product design. This can ensure that the professional knowledge and practical skills learned by students are closely linked to the needs of the insurance industry. Secondly, in order to better evaluate students' learning outcomes, it is necessary to establish a diversified evaluation system. This system should not only focus on students' exam results, but also comprehensively consider their practical application ability, comprehensive quality, and industry standards, including academic research ability, team collaboration ability, business processing ability, etc., so as to comprehensively evaluate students' learning outcomes from multiple perspectives. In addition, to ensure the objectivity and practicality of the evaluation system, experts from the insurance industry can be invited to participate in the development and implementation of the evaluation system. They can provide more targeted feedback and suggestions to students based on their own experience and standards. Meanwhile, schools can incorporate certification courses in the insurance industry into their curriculum system and

encourage students to take vocational certification exams. Through this approach, students can not only gain academic recognition, but also high recognition within the industry. Finally, in order to ensure the smooth progress of the reform of the education evaluation system, schools need to establish an effective feedback mechanism. By regularly collecting and analyzing feedback from students, as well as suggestions and opinions from industry experts and employers, timely understanding the advantages and disadvantages of the evaluation system, and making corresponding adjustments and improvements.

4.2 On the Basis of Improving the Quality of Teachers, We Will Improve the Management System of Tutors Inside and Outside Schools

Firstly, strengthen the education and training of insurance master's degree teachers, regularly organize teachers to participate in professional training, academic exchanges and other activities, update educational concepts, encourage on campus mentors to conduct industry research on the front line of enterprises, understand actual work processes and market demands, improve teachers' practical ability and teaching level, and better guide students in practical operations and innovation and entrepreneurship. In addition to strengthening the education and training of teachers on campus, actively introducing high-level insurance talents with doctoral degrees and overseas study experience is also one of the key measures to improve the quality of teachers. These high-level talents usually have rich academic backgrounds and industry experience, which can bring new educational concepts and teaching methods to schools, while also providing students with higher quality teaching and guidance. At the same time, for off campus mentors, the responsibilities and requirements of off campus mentors should be clearly defined. A scientific selection process should be established, and candidates should be comprehensively evaluated through interviews, trial lectures, and other methods to ensure that the selected off campus mentors have a high teaching level and good professional ethics; And establish specific regulations and job requirements for off campus mentors to ensure that they can conscientiously fulfill their duties. For example, it is stipulated that off campus mentors should regularly communicate and exchange ideas with students, guide them in practical exploration, and pay attention to their ideological trends. At the same time, it is necessary to strengthen the supervision and evaluation of the work of external mentors to ensure the quality of their work. For example, regularly collecting students' opinions and suggestions on off campus mentors, understanding their work performance and teaching quality, and providing timely feedback to mentors to promote their improvement; Schools can also organize regular meetings and exchange activities, invite external mentors to participate, and share teaching experience and methods.

4.3 Using Curriculum Design as the Starting Point, Improve the Teaching System of "Theory + Case Study + Practice"

On the one hand, based on the three core elements of theory, case studies, and practice in curriculum design, a high-level teaching system for graduate education is constructed. Firstly, theoretical teaching is the foundation of the entire teaching system, and the cultivation of insurance master's and professional talents should ensure the systematicity and completeness of theoretical teaching.

Compared with undergraduate education in insurance, more attention should be paid to the cultivation of research methods and analytical problem-solving abilities in the insurance field. Secondly, as an important teaching method in professional master's education, case teaching can help students better understand theoretical knowledge and cultivate their practical operational abilities by introducing real insurance related cases. In case teaching, teachers should choose representative cases to guide students in exploring different types of insurance business issues, further inspiring their interest and understanding in practical work. Finally, practical teaching is the cornerstone of the entire teaching system. In terms of curriculum design, emphasis should be placed on increasing the proportion of practical courses, such as simulation experiments, project communication, and internship practice, to guide students to adapt to the difficulty of work content after graduation in advance. Compared with undergraduate education, graduate education should pay more attention to guiding students to conduct in-depth research and practical innovation in practical teaching, encouraging them to explore new methods and ideas, and improving their research and innovation abilities. On the other hand, in order to meet the higher requirements of graduate education, we should focus on the construction of new liberal arts majors and encourage interdisciplinary and integrated training. In order to achieve this goal, a specialized interdisciplinary training program for insurance master's degree should be developed. Compared to the situation where insurance undergraduate students have relatively fewer interdisciplinary courses and are mostly basic courses, the interdisciplinary curriculum of insurance master's degree should be more rich and in-depth, with an appropriate increase in courses such as mathematical statistics and law, so that students can comprehensively master professional knowledge and skills and cultivate their ability to solve practical problems. Encourage teachers and students to engage in interdisciplinary research and collaboration, promoting cross disciplinary integration between different disciplines. By organizing interdisciplinary seminars, academic exchanges, and other activities, we provide a communication platform for teachers and students to stimulate innovative thinking. At the same time, it is advocated to adopt various teaching forms and utilize modern information technology tools such as multimedia and online education to enrich teaching methods and resources. By introducing insurance business simulation software and experiments, students can conduct practical operations and practices in a simulation environment. By simulating insurance business processes, risk management cases, etc., teaching effectiveness and student learning experience can be improved.

4.4 Focusing on the Needs of Enterprises, Establish a Long-Term Mechanism for School-Enterprise Cooperation

In order to better meet the needs of enterprises and overcome the difficulties of industry education integration, it is necessary to actively build a long-term mechanism for school enterprise cooperation. Firstly, the integration of industry and education requires a deep understanding of the needs of enterprises. Training units should regularly organize research to understand the development trends of the insurance industry, the specific needs of enterprises, and the requirements for talents. Based on

these research results, mentors can lead students to carry out more projects related to practical work needs, help students accumulate project experience, and facilitate insurance master's students to deepen their understanding and application of insurance professional knowledge in project practice. Secondly, enrich the forms of school enterprise cooperation, for example, schools and enterprises can establish joint research centers or school enterprise cooperation platforms to jointly carry out research projects and topics, provide online communication, information sharing, and resource integration services, strengthen communication and cooperation between both parties, and promote the coordinated development of talent cultivation and technological innovation. Once again, in order to ensure the long-term stable development of school enterprise cooperation, both parties should establish a mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation mechanism. For example, schools can provide technical support, employee training, and other services to businesses in exchange for their support in educational resources. In addition, both parties can jointly establish scholarships, scholarships, etc. to motivate students to learn and participate in insurance related project activities. Finally, the long-term mechanism of school enterprise cooperation still needs to be established on the integrity and responsibility of both parties. Both parties should clarify their respective responsibilities and obligations to ensure the smooth progress of cooperation. At the same time, both parties should regularly evaluate and provide feedback on the effectiveness of cooperation, adjust the cooperation plan in a timely manner to meet the constantly changing needs of the enterprise. By establishing an effective communication mechanism between schools and enterprises, strengthen the trust and cooperation foundation of both parties, and further improve the effectiveness and quality of industry education integration.

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