



# Thoughts and Practice on the Education Projects of Sino-foreign Credit Mutual Recognition in Private Undergraduate Universities

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## ABSTRACT

International development is a challenge that each university must face. The educational mechanism of private undergraduate universities is flexible, and has certain advantages in expanding international education programs. Sino-foreign credit mutual recognition programs are more common in private undergraduate universities. With the continuous development of resources and models on international education cooperation, the forms of Sino-foreign credits mutual recognition cooperation are becoming more diversified. The rapid development of Chinese and foreign credit recognition education programs in private undergraduate universities requires scientific and advanced management concepts and support. Young private universities have short international development time and lack of experience. Therefore, relevant issues should be more researched.

This paper analyzes the problems and challenges in the education mode and management of Sino-foreign credit mutual recognition projects in private undergraduate universities, and puts forward relevant countermeasures.

## 1. The Mode of the Credit Mutual Recognition Project of Chinese and Foreign Universities

The Sino-foreign Credit Mutual Recognition Education Project is an education cooperation form that Chinese universities and one or more foreign universities recognize each other in terms of courses, credits, and assessment systems<sup>[1-5]</sup>. Currently, universities in the British, Australia, and the United States are the main partner universities<sup>[6]</sup>. This education form satisfies the needs of students to study abroad, establishes a good interactive communication relationship with overseas universities, and promotes exchanges and learning between the two parties<sup>[7]</sup>.

The teaching system of Chinese universities is different from overseas universities in terms of credits, semesters,

and school system<sup>[8]</sup>. To achieve mutual recognition, both universities need to jointly construct and discuss the training plans, assessment methods, and curriculum systems. This is a brand new model and an opportunity to exchange and learn from each other.

In terms of credit value, each country is different. The credit of a professional course in the China is usually 2-4 credits, the credit of a professional course in the UK is usually 20 credits, and the credit in the United States is 3-4 credits per course. In fact, mutual recognition of credits is mutual recognition of courses.

The semester is different. In an academic year, Chinese University has two terms each lasting 17-18 weeks. America University has two (one fall and one spring) terms each lasting 15 weeks including 1 exam week, and a

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summer term of 8-10 weeks. The total number of hours of coursework for the master's degree varies based on master degree program chosen.

The school system is different. The taught master's degree program in the UK usually takes one year, the American master's program usually takes two years, and the taught program in Chinese usually takes three years.

The name of the education project for mutual recognition of Chinese and foreign credits, usually based on the domestic study duration plus the foreign study duration as the project abbreviation. Such as "2+2", "3+1", etc.<sup>[9]</sup>. The first number is the duration of the domestic university system. The second number is the duration of the foreign university system. There are currently the following 4 cooperative modes of credit mutual recognition.

### 1.1 2+2

Undergraduate dual-degree education mode, 2 year of study home and 2 year of study abroad. The main partner universities such as United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States. It is necessary to make a comprehensive adjustment to the domestic teaching plan according to foreign courses<sup>[10]</sup>.

The mode studying abroad for 2 years, the time and cost of studying abroad will increase, and the students can better experience the atmosphere of undergraduate education abroad. This model is widely used in universities and has a high level of recognition by students.

### 1.2 3+1

Undergraduate dual-degree education mode. 3 year of study home and 1 year of study abroad. The main partners are universities in the UK, Australia. Through four years of study, students can obtain BA degree from domestic universities and foreign cooperative universities. Students can apply for a master degree program with high ranking oversea. The goal is to improve students' academic level.

### 1.3 3+1

The undergraduate to master program. 3 year of study home in BA degree and 1-year of master's degree program in a British university. The cooperate institutions is fewer. Only 5 UK universities can accept this mode.

### 1.4 3+2

The undergraduate to master education project. 3 year of study home, 2 year of study in universities in the United States or Australia. To collaborate to offer a Bachelor's and a Master's Degree Cooperative Program under an academic articulation partnership.

The advantage of the project is that the school system is short and saves time. In the United States, "2" is a 1-year pre-master's course and a 1-year formal master's course. Students can directly apply for American postgraduate courses through the domestic scores of 3 years, and can be waived from the GRE and GMAT test requirements.

The 3+1+1 cooperative program is for students who first complete 3 years of undergraduate study, and then enroll at American University for 1 year in order to complete the bachelor's degree before applying for the American University master's degree program, which takes approximately 1 year.

Students admitted as graduate students to the 3+1+1 Program and continuing their graduate studies at American University will enroll as full-time international students with a minimum course load of 12 credit hours per semester at the undergraduate level and 9 credit hours at the graduate level to comply with U.S. immigration law. In order to complete the Program in a timely manner, students may need to enroll in more than 18 credit hours.

The above are the more common credit recognition project models. The main differences are ① the time of studying abroad is different, ② the cost of studying abroad is different, and ③ the country of cooperation is different. The goals of (1) and (2) are double undergraduate education, and the goals of (3) and (4) are master degrees. At present, the docking of credit recognition programs is more flexible and highly recognized is the British higher education model.

## 2. Problems in the Teaching Management of Credit Mutual Recognition Program

The credit recognition program between private undergraduate universities and foreign universities has received extensive attention and recognition, and is an effective way for private undergraduate universities to establish cooperative relations with foreign universities<sup>[11]</sup>. The first stage of the credit recognition program is usually managed by Chinese universities. The students who are recruited and enrolled in the Cooperative Program shall be subject to all processes, procedures, policies and protocols when enrolled in the component of the program. The following analyzes the problems in the teaching management of the credit recognition project.

### 2.1 The Problem of Students' English Language Level

The host university will preselect students in the Program who have met the minimum admission requirements agreed upon by the Parties for transfer admission into the

second stage of the Program at overseas university. The English proficiency plays an important role in international education program. In the Private undergraduate universities, especially the students of STEM, have limited English proficiency and must make a new breakthrough. “3+1”, “2+2” and Sino-foreign credit mutual recognition projects, students have to meet the BA admission requirements of foreign universities. If the language is not meet the requirements, they will not be able to enter the degree courses smoothly.

## 2.2 The Problem of Credits Transfer

If the foreign courses didn't pass smoothly and cannot be transferred back to domestic universities, which leads to heavy pressure and long learning duration after returning home universities<sup>[12-13]</sup>. Taking the exchange student program of Brenau University in the United States as an example, student study in the United States for 3 month, it is a 1-term exchange program. Due to the English language level, cultural differences, teaching methods and other issues, the student is difficult to adapt to the study in foreign universities. The results of the four courses selected in the Brenau University are not passed smoothly. As a result, the transfer of credits back to China is failed. Therefore, students need to make up the credits of domestic teaching after returning home, which increases the pressure of learning and the burden of study.

## 2.3 The Problem of Thesis Identification

Students in “3+1” program overseas study duration is short. Domestic universities usually prefer the passed result of foreign undergraduate thesis as the conditional evaluation of domestic thesis<sup>[14]</sup>. The way reduces the pressure and burden of study academically for students. However, there are certain risks in such conditions. If the students failed to pass the exam or thesis during study abroad, etc., it will directly affect the application of domestic degree.

Thesis identification of foreign universities have problems about time that cannot be smoothly connected. For example, the graduation time for undergraduate in UK is usually in June. During June, domestic universities have completed the application and review of BA degree. If the student want to recognize a foreign thesis, it will directly lead to delay of domestic graduation.

## 2.4 The Problem of Insufficient Construction of English Curriculum

The host university shall assist all students through the preparation and orientation process before studying

abroad.

Classes of credit mutual recognition have fewer English Curriculum. Due to the problems of teacher and less funds, the construction of English courses in private undergraduate universities is very difficult.

## 2.5 The Problem of Insufficient Introduction of Foreign Educational Resources

To be assured to introduce high quality education resources is the main purpose of Sino-foreign credit mutual recognition projects. Sino-foreign credit mutual recognition projects are usually managed by domestic universities. In the process of joint training, the introduction of foreign educational resources isn't adequate. The courses taught by foreign parties are usually less, ranging from 2-3 days per semester. There is less interaction and exchanges between domestic and foreign universities, cannot achieve the goal of joint training.

## 3. Countermeasures of Academic Management in Sino-foreign Credit Mutual Recognition Projects

(1) Integration of teaching and examination, upgrade the students' English level<sup>[15]</sup>. Introduce the internal testing system of foreign universities, English standardized test system and other assessment methods, understanding the students' English level, adjust the teaching contents and progression in time, avoid the connection problem of separation of teaching and testing.

Admissions Office shall review student applications in a timely manner and issue an acceptance letter to students who have met all applicable admission requirements to enroll for the Program. And encourage students who do not meet the English language proficiency requirement to enroll in intensive ESL courses for English improvement.

Target on the problem of students' weak spoken English, increase class hours and practice opportunities.

For the first three or two years of the Program delivered at home, the host university shall maintain all academic standards and offer equivalent courses pre-approved by partner university to the students in the Program, also maintain academic records of all students in the Program and issue transcripts upon students' request or the request of partner university.

Both universities shall maintain students' transcripts and records and other evidence, which sufficiently and properly reflects all performance of the services described herein.

By using immersive teaching methods to improve learning motivation, set goals, and promote English teach-

ing in all-round and from multiple perspectives. Improve students' language application ability, help students overcome the English language barriers.

(2) Students going to study abroad need to match their domestic majors, and do a pre-assessment in course construction to ensure that the courses and credits taken abroad match the domestic courses, shall grant and allow students to transfer credits for all pre-approved Equivalent courses to satisfy certain course or prerequisite requirements. Ensure that the courses you learn are similar to the domestic majors, avoid the problems that foreign courses cannot be transferred back to China, and avoid possible problems and risks in advance.

(3) The Class of 3+1 Program, it is recommended to shortening the length of study, complete the 4-year credit courses in 3 years. The preparation and study of the dissertation began in the third year of university. Complete all credits of domestic courses in the end of the third year of university, ensure the smooth graduation from domestic courses. This method is achievable in terms of time. Domestic undergraduate teaching usually has fewer courses in the fourth year, it is easy to operate.

(4) Increase the investment of education funds, to ensure the construction of the different major English courses. Improve the opportunity for teacher to study abroad, increase teachers' international vision, improve the teachers' teaching level, cultivate the stable teachers team to achieve the purpose of curriculum construction. In order to better adapt and link foreign undergraduate courses for students, appropriately increase the subjects and time taught by foreign universities. In order to better link up study abroad courses, preparatory courses are implanted<sup>[16]</sup>.

(5) The credit mutual recognition project must be implemented, and the teaching have to truly achieve "joint training". Give full play to the role of MOOC<sup>[17]</sup> and the advantages of distance learning<sup>[18]</sup>. In the process of mutual recognition of credits, the introduction of high-quality foreign educational resources is an important part. Since professors from foreign universities come to the domestic to teach, the time and transportation costs are high. Therefore, it is necessary to make full use of distance teaching to realize the introduction of teaching resources and optimize the teaching mode while reducing costs<sup>[19]</sup>. Increase the interaction and communication between foreign universities and domestic class students. Partner University shall provide student services including international student check-in and orientation, will provide institutional information for the development of marketing and recruitment materials. For example, when a student enrolls in credit mutual recognition projects, arrange a professor

from a foreign university as a tutor. Increase interaction with students, increase the exchange chances between foreign universities and the project students<sup>[20]</sup>.

#### 4. Conclusion

The mutual recognition program of Chinese and foreign universities is currently a very common program in domestic private undergraduate universities. While the project meets the interests of students studying abroad, should improve the quality of teaching, optimize the credits transfer mechanism, increase the introduction of foreign teaching resources and make improvements and innovations. Use this as a breakthrough to increase opportunities for exchanges and interactions with foreign universities<sup>[21]</sup>. So as to choose the best, provide students with better educational resources, improve students' academic level and employment competitiveness. Establish a long-term development mechanism for the mutual recognition of Chinese and foreign credits projects, improve the connotation construction of project education and teaching, and achieve the goal of sustainable development.

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