

The significance of internship to the cultivation of professional-degree postgraduate: from student subject perspective

Mengyuan Chen

Graduate School of Education, Peking University, Beijing, 100871

Introduction

With the popularization of higher education, China launched the professional-degree postgraduate education at the end of the 20th century. In recent years, in order to optimize the education structure of postgraduate students and cultivate compound talents with solid theoretical basis and practical ability, China has expanded the enrollment of professional masters largely.

On the background of oversupply of graduates, more and more professional-degree postgraduates need to prove their working ability through internships beyond their degree.

What role does internship play in the cultivation of professional masters? How helpful are internships to work? Under the premise that internship has become an important way to obtain career, how should professional master balance the relationship between course study and internship? The purpose of this study is to explore these issues, not only to provide advice for graduate education in China, but also to provide reference for other countries in the world facing the situation of oversupply of graduates.

Materials and methods

Starting from 2014, the school of economics of Peking University will no longer recruit full-time academic postgraduate students. The college optimizes and adjusts the enrollment structure of graduate students, positioning the cultivation of academic talents to recruit and train doctoral students, and the cultivation of applied talents to recruit and train "professional degree" graduates. The college is committed to changing the postgraduate group from the original structure of single academic research-oriented to research-oriented and application-oriented.

Year	2016	2017	2018
The total number	138	110	109
The ratio of men to women	7:6	5:6	1:1
Go abroad or go to school	2	1	3
Public administration, social security and social organizations	34	10	7
Education	2	4	0
Finance	92	89	60
Information transmission, software and information technology services	1	0	0.5
Research and technical services	0	1	1
Transportation, warehousing and postal services	3	0	0
Leasing and commercial services	1	2	0.5
Others	2	3	0

From the employment data of the school of economics in recent years, it can be seen that the proportion of going abroad or going to school is only 1-2%, and the drastic reform also means the transformation trend of student training.

Taking Faculty of Economics of Peking University as an example, this study adopts a qualitative method and analyzes the interview data of 8 students and 1 teacher of school of economics, to find the significance of internship in the cultivation of professional masters. Two graduate interviewers had more than five internships during their studies.

Interview	College School	Major	Education Background	Gender	Age	Important internship	Future plan
Students	Peking University	Finance	Bachelor's degree	Male	24	CICC invests	Employment
	Peking University	Finance	Bachelor's degree	Male	25	Investment Banking	Employment
	Peking University	Finance	Bachelor's degree	Male	23	Citic securities	Employment
	Peking University	Tax	Bachelor's degree	Female	23	Investment Banking	Employment
	Peking University	Tax	Bachelor's degree	Male	23	Huatai united securities	Employment
	Beijing Normal University	Law	Bachelor's degree	Female	22	Law firm(civil)	Employment/PhD
Graduate Students	Tsinghua university	Master of Management		Male	29	small capital company	Jianxin Investment
	Tsinghua university	Master of Management		Female	28	deloitte tax department	ICBC financial management

Students need to do internship work within two years, during complete the course learning, graduation thesis and academic research, which inevitably leads to some awkwardness in the training process.

In particular, the conflict between internship and course participation and academic activities is obvious.

Why do students still choose to invest so much energy and time in internships?

Where does the internship help with personal development?

The interview focuses on the internship experience and the value gained, including the internship's help during the job-hunting period and the internship experience's help after entering the job.

In the next stage, I will conduct more comprehensive and targeted interviews according to the research progress.

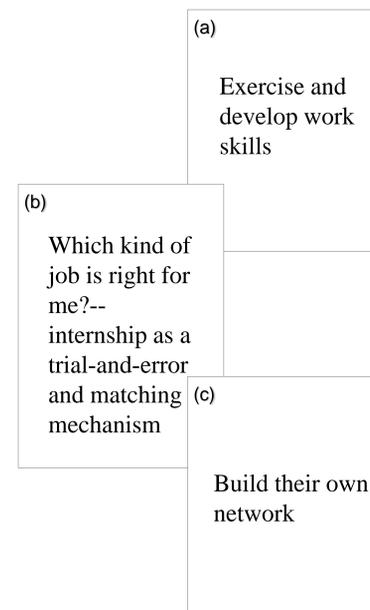
Figure 1. School of economics, Peking University Graduate students graduate destination
Figure 2.

Results

Our research shows that education certificates, obtained through specialized examinations, represent students' existing knowledge and skills, but in the eyes of students, internships can better link what they have learned in class with their own work experience, and the limitations of book-learning can be compensated by internships.

Generally speaking, the influence of internship includes four aspects:

- (1) Students integrate into the working environment, understand the work and career prospects.
- (2) Develop interpersonal and social skills and create valuable connections and networks.
- (3) Increase the contact with the industry, help oneself more clearly control the industry demand.
- (4) Job-based internship can bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practice, exercise the employability, and help students play an important role in making a good career choice.



Conclusions

With the financial industry saturated with talent, internships may play a bigger role in employee selection than their educational background. However, the study from student subject perspective found that many students value internships so much that they are willing to give up attendance in some courses. This makes them more likely to rely on future salaries and benefits while paying for the expensive tuition.

Undoubtedly, there are more investigations and findings to make the study more complete and the results more reliable.

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