

# A Study on the Reform Path of Application-Oriented University Graduation Examination

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**ABSTRACT.** In the context of the application-oriented transformation of some universities in China, graduation thesis, as a traditional graduation assessment method, can check students' academic level, but it cannot well reflect their application ability. Moreover, in recent years, the employment problem has become prominent, so it is really necessary to promote students' practical ability through the reform of graduation assessment method. By systematically expound the current situation and problems of undergraduate graduation thesis, this paper puts forward a diversified graduation examination method, which is mainly based on graduation thesis and supplemented by design, works, reports and schemes. Specifically, it includes: (1) explore the application of graduation project in humanities and social science majors; (2) focus on the application orientation of graduation thesis topic selection; (3) adopt the graduation examination method combining graduation thesis and graduation design.

**KEYWORDS:** Graduation examination, Application-oriented university, Undergraduates, Graduation thesis, Diversification, Reform

## 1. Introduction

Graduation examination in undergraduate talent training is often reflected in the graduation thesis (design), but the quality and management of undergraduate graduation thesis are not as good as undergraduate degree thesis standards. Local colleges and universities are mainly committed to cultivating application-oriented talents and serving the local economic development. At present, most local colleges and universities mainly examine undergraduate graduates in the form of graduation thesis. In fact, a single thesis examination cannot fully reflect the professional practice ability of graduates from application-oriented universities. Local colleges and universities should learn from the diversified evaluation methods of foreign colleges and universities, highlight process assessment and the improvement of students' application ability, and carry out the application-oriented reform of the single evaluation method.

## 2. Current Situation and Problems of Undergraduate Graduation Thesis

Undergraduate graduation thesis is a major means of university undergraduate course graduation examination at present stage, in CNKI retrieval of "undergraduate course graduation thesis" to retrieve as many as 1924 results, undergraduate course graduation thesis has become the important direction of higher education research, which has 128 papers published in core journals, the time span is 1992-2020.

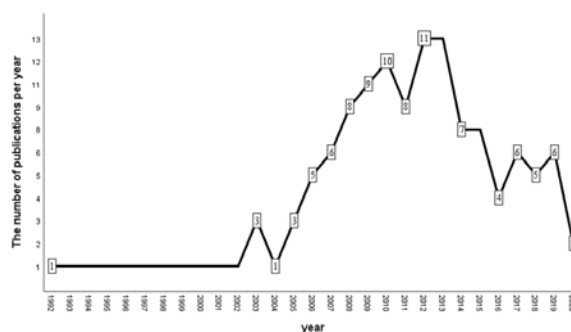


Fig.1 The Number of Annual Publications of Undergraduate Thesis Related Research in Core Journals

Since the enrollment expansion of ordinary institutions of higher learning in 1999, the former Elite Education has been transformed into the current Mass Education. In the 40 years since the resumption of the college entrance examination in 1978, the number of college students has increased by more than 35 million, or nearly 900,000 per year on average. In 1978, the gross enrollment rate was only 2.7%, and in 2017, it reached 45.7%, a nearly 20-fold increase. The rapid expansion of the scale of universities leads to the relative shortage of teaching resources, the uneven quality level of undergraduate graduation thesis, the lack of strict examination and other problems have become increasingly prominent, resulting in the rapid increase of the research related to graduation thesis after 2002. The rapid expansion of student scale and the uneven running level of colleges and universities will inevitably lead to the decline in the quality of talent training. In addition, with the development of educational concepts such as application-oriented talent training, the quality management and system reform of undergraduate graduation thesis have attracted the attention of researchers. Since 2005, a large number of related studies have been conducted.

*Table 1 High-Frequency Keywords of Undergraduate Thesis Research (Top 20)*

High frequency keywords	Frequency	High frequency keywords	Frequency
graduation thesis	73	graduation thesis writing	5
undergraduate thesis	22	guidance	5
quality	11	innovation	4
undergraduate course	8	Bachelor's thesis	4
graduation thesis (design)	7	problem	4
undergraduates	6	academic norms	3
countermeasures	6	adult education	3
Accounting major	6	quality of graduation thesis	3
teaching reform	6	affecting factors	3
English major	6	practice	3

Through the co-occurrence analysis of 128 articles published in core journals by CiteSpace software, it was found that quality, countermeasures, teaching reform, innovation, problems and practice became high-frequency keywords, which reflected the problems in the quality and management of undergraduate graduation thesis. The thesis is supposed to show the academic results of undergraduate study, but in recent years, it has been criticized repeatedly for its poor quality, formalism and serious plagiarism. It is embodied in the following aspects: (1) graduation thesis is usually arranged in the last semester of university, which is in conflict with the students' employment. (2) the graduation thesis is academic. Most employers pay more attention to students' graduation school level and practical ability, instead of paying too much attention to students' academic level. (3) the examination of graduation thesis is not strict, and some of the instructors are of limited ability and lack of responsibility, resulting in the formalization of undergraduate graduation thesis. (4) undergraduates' professional knowledge and scientific research literacy are not enough, and their papers are patchwork and plagiarism is serious. (5) application-oriented colleges and universities focus on the cultivation of application ability, and students are not required to write academic graduation thesis; Today's undergraduate students, no matter the training objectives or group characteristics, have been different from 30 years ago, writing papers is not too meaningful, it is recommended to cancel the undergraduate papers.

### **3. The Necessity of the Reform of Graduation Examination Method**

At present, the wide admission and strict exit of foreign universities are in sharp contrast to the strict admission and strict exit of domestic universities. The wide admission is conducive to expanding the level of higher education for the whole people, and the strict exit is conducive to standardizing the teaching process and consolidating the teaching effect of higher education. Now, many local colleges are applied transformation, but is still used graduation examination academic thinking, at the time of graduation examination does not highlight the concept of service to the local economy, the assessment way on still like the research universities take the same approach, the last four years of graduation thesis is not really become a test of learning outcomes.

A single graduation thesis is difficult to reflect the comprehensive ability of graduates. For undergraduate students, they do not have a special research direction like graduate students, but only have a broad range of professional learning. However, when writing the graduation thesis, students must choose a specific direction and strictly follow the writing rules of the academic paper. In fact, it can be seen from the writing quality of undergraduate graduation thesis in the past that the ability of undergraduate graduates to control the thesis is limited. Due to the lack of specialized research direction and systematic scientific research training, the undergraduate graduation thesis sometimes becomes a form of graduation.

Local colleges and universities under the employment will to a certain extent, reduce the demand for graduates examination, in order to improve the competitiveness of students in the job market and reflect the teaching

achievements of colleges and universities, some schools value students' employment and one's deceased father grind rate, more so for the last can be graduation examination standard, this to a certain extent, leading to teaching link is disconnected and graduation examination, school location and the students' practical ability don't match.

#### **4. The Feasibility of the Reform of Graduation Examination Method**

For universities and research institutes, although they have their own characteristics in talent training and have certain autonomy in running schools, they must carry out the educational policies and policies of the state, which is the basic legal basis and institutional basis for higher education activities. The Higher Education Law of the People's Republic of China and the Regulations of the People's Republic of China on Academic Degree have clearly stipulated the academic standards and degree conferment conditions for each stage of academic degree education. Higher Education Law clearly stated that undergraduate graduates should have the initial ability to engage in the actual work and research work of the major.

The degree regulations for master's and doctoral degree has through the special requirement of the dissertation, and the requirement of a bachelor's degree for expressed as "good", did not mention a specific paper requirements, visible paper is not a necessary and sufficient condition to obtain a bachelor's degree, and it has become a part of colleges and universities to take diversified graduation examination way of institutional basis.

Sichuan university, in order to improve the undergraduate innovative talent training, the high quality, diversified graduation thesis (design) reform and clearly put forward the undergraduate course graduation thesis can is a traditional form of graduation thesis (design), also can be reflect genuine and creative ability of students and professional related work, design, research report, competition achievements, scientific research training and college students' innovative pilot scheme achievements, good articles published in newspapers and magazines, etc. Then, in many colleges and universities take the diversified paper of graduation examination way, this measure is to activate the students' potential and creativity, has opened up for the students can all roads leading to the door of the graduation to help all-round and multi-angle release of colleges and universities teaching effects and students' learning potential, rather than dwell on graduation thesis this fixed form. The assessment of multiple graduation places higher requirements on students' professional quality and innovation ability, so research universities can take the lead in exploring and trying to promote the cultivation of innovative talents. However, the diversification of undergraduate graduation thesis forms requires a whole set of systems and standards to regulate, and the evaluation criteria of diversified graduation assessment methods should be fair and operable. Therefore, it is absolutely impossible to let diversified selection become the back door of undergraduate graduation assessment.

#### **5. Suggestions on the Reform of Graduation Examination Method**

##### ***5.1 To Explore the Application of Graduation Design in Humanities and Social Science Majors***

Usually, only science and engineering majors can carry out graduation design. However, with the transformation of some colleges and universities into application-oriented majors, humanities and social sciences majors can also explore and carry out graduation design according to their professional characteristics. Graduation design can be in the form of schemes, works and research reports. Compared with the academic paper, graduation design pay more attention to the students' application ability and the ability to solve practical problems, humanities and social sciences professional graduates in employment is usually more difficult than in science and engineering graduates, one of the biggest reason is that the professional practicality is not strong, professional ability can't be quickly converted to work ability, can adopt the mode of graduation design as the inspection in a certain extent, to strengthen the application of this kind of professional guidance, and upgrade the application ability of college graduates.

##### ***5.2 Focus on the Application Orientation of Graduation Thesis Topic Selection***

As long as the paper is academic in nature, undergraduate graduation thesis is no exception. However, for undergraduates, due to the depth of their knowledge and the lack of research methods, it is quite difficult to write an article with a certain academic level. For application-oriented university, undergraduate course graduation thesis in the selected topic can be combined with the feature of local economic development, derived from professional practice, social practice activities, such as paper topic selection, strengthening the consciousness of solving practical problems, make the paper in the academic and applied on a certain degree of balance, mining the characteristics of undergraduate course graduation thesis and its role in talent training.

### **5.3 Construct the Graduation Examination Method Combining Graduation Thesis & Graduation Design**

For most colleges and universities, the vast majority of undergraduate graduates will be directly employed after graduation, and only a few students choose to take the postgraduate entrance examination for further study. The two types of students have different development paths after graduation. Those who choose employment should strengthen their application ability, while those who choose to continue their study should focus on cultivating their scientific research ability. In this context, can try to build “graduation thesis and graduation design” the graduation examination way of combining students to choose jobs and the ability to apply upgrade oriented of graduation design, to choose graduate students take to scientific research as the guidance of graduation thesis, improve the capacity of classified graduation examination, the examination of graduation and organic combination of students' career development.

## **6. Conclusion**

The goal of higher education reform should be to alienate the paradigm trap, reduce the amount of structured learning, and give students more learning space and freedom. The improvement of undergraduate education quality should start from the undergraduate graduation thesis, and guide students to study independently and explore the unknown, instead of the traditional classroom teaching and skills practice<sup>0</sup>. In practice, colleges and universities should take graduation thesis as the main way, design, works, reports, programs and other ways as an important supplement to the diversified graduation assessment.

For traditional research universities, the academic value of undergraduate graduation thesis should be valued and improved. For application-oriented universities, it is also necessary to improve students' comprehensive ability by analyzing and solving practical problems through appropriate topics and methods. there is no essential difference in school level and subject category in undergraduate graduation thesis. To some extent, works, designs, reports and competition results have cultivated and improved students' professional level and comprehensive ability, and can also be used as a supplementary form of undergraduate graduation thesis according to their professional characteristics.

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