WHIOCE PUBLISHING PTE. LTD.
PROVIDING
FIRST-CLASS SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION
FOR TOP SCHOLARS

2025 Volume 3, Issue 10
Educational Innovation Research
ISSN: 3029-1844(Print) ISSN: 3029-1852(Online)

Construction and Implementation Strategy of Private Undergraduate Design Specialty Course System under the Guidance of Vocational Orientation

Bo Yuan
School of Design, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou 571126, Hainan, China

**Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.*

Abstract: Vocational orientation serves as the core principle guiding the cultivation of applied talents in private undergraduate design programs. The development of distinctive curriculum systems is crucial for demonstrating institutional strengths, aligning with industry demands, and overcoming homogenization. Current private undergraduate design curricula face challenges including unclear vocational focus, lack of distinctive features, disconnection between courses and job requirements, and weak implementation effectiveness, resulting in a "supply-demand mismatch" between graduates and industry needs. This study, centered on vocational orientation, integrates the institutional positioning of private universities with the professional and practical nature of design disciplines. It clarifies the core principles for constructing distinctive curriculum systems, explores implementation pathways through three dimensions (course objectives, structure, and content), and proposes targeted strategies. The research aims to provide theoretical references and practical models for building curriculum systems that emphasize vocational orientation, highlight institutional characteristics, and meet job requirements in private undergraduate design programs.

Keywords: vocational orientation; private undergraduate education; design specialty; distinctive curriculum system; construction path; implementation strategy

Online publication: November 26, 2025

1. Introduction

As a vital component of China's higher education system, private undergraduate education demonstrates inherent advantages in cultivating applied and technical professionals through flexible institutional mechanisms, strong market responsiveness, and close industry-academia collaboration. The design discipline, as a quintessential applied field, maintains a high degree of alignment between talent development and industry job requirements. The vocational-oriented approach, as the core philosophy of applied education, demands that private undergraduate design programs consistently adhere to industry competency standards throughout the entire educational process. Currently, some private design programs still exhibit issues such as "overemphasis on theory at the expense of practice" and "prioritizing imitation over distinctive features" in curriculum development. These programs often mechanically replicate the course structures of

regular undergraduate institutions, lacking clear industry orientation. Their content remains disconnected from industry trends and practical job requirements, failing to incorporate institutional or regional industrial characteristics. Furthermore, weak industry-academia collaboration during implementation and superficial integration of courses and positions result in graduates with disconnected theoretical foundations and practical skills, ultimately falling short of the design industry's demand for applied design professionals[1].

Developing a distinctive curriculum system guided by vocational orientation is a pivotal strategy for private undergraduate design programs to achieve applied talent cultivation goals, align with industry demands, and highlight institutional uniqueness. Vocational orientation emphasizes competency-based training for professional roles, while the distinctive curriculum system leverages institutional and regional industrial resources to foster differentiated development. The integration of these two approaches is essential for cultivating design professionals in private undergraduate programs. Grounded in the operational realities of private universities and considering the disciplinary characteristics of design studies alongside industry needs, this paper explores pathways and implementation strategies for constructing a vocational-oriented distinctive curriculum system. The aim is to drive curriculum reforms in private undergraduate design programs and enhance the quality of talent development[2].

2. Core Principles for Constructing Characteristic Curriculum System of Private Undergraduate Design Specialty under the Guidance of Vocational Orientation

2.1. Core Competencies: Integration of Job and Curriculum

Based on the ability standard, work task and professional norm of the core position in the design industry, the position requirement is integrated into the whole process of the curriculum system construction, and the curriculum goal is connected with the position ability goal, the curriculum content is connected with the work task, and the teaching process is connected with the production process, so as to ensure the professionalism and practicability of the curriculum system[3].

2.2. Specialized Empowerment for Differentiated Development

Based on the private undergraduate colleges' educational orientation, faculty advantages, school-enterprise cooperation resources and the industrial and cultural characteristics of the region, the unique resource endowment of the school is explored, the characteristic elements are integrated into the curriculum system, and the curriculum characteristics different from the general undergraduate colleges and other private colleges are created to achieve differentiated development.

2.3. Unity of Knowledge and Action, Practice as the Priority

The paper focuses on the practicality of design profession, strengthens the core position of practice teaching in the curriculum system, optimizes the proportion of theory teaching and practice teaching, constructs a progressive practice curriculum system, enables students to master professional skills and improve the characteristic design ability in practice, and realizes "learning by doing, doing by learning".

2.4. System Integration, Undergraduate Competence

By following the cognitive development patterns of students and the principles of vocational competency cultivation, the curriculum system ensures systematic integration and progressive progression across all modules and courses. It also maintains the academic nature of private undergraduate education, strengthening students 'theoretical foundation at the bachelor's level while fostering their design innovation capabilities and career development skills, which distinguishes it from the skill-oriented training of vocational college programs[4].

3. The Construction Path of Private Undergraduate Design Specialty Course System under the Guidance of Vocational Orientation

3.1. Anchoring Vocational Needs, Clarifying the Objectives and Positioning of the Curriculum System

The development of a curriculum system should first center on the occupational demands of the design industry, while integrating the distinctive features of private undergraduate institutions and regional industrial development. This approach helps clarify the training objectives and positioning of the curriculum, avoiding ambiguity and misalignment. Conducting precise research on occupational needs, a team comprising professional faculty, industry mentors, and experts should be formed to thoroughly investigate regional design industry trends, core job roles (e.g., brand design and packaging design in visual communication, product styling and cultural creative product design), and competency standards. By systematically identifying the core skills, essential qualities, and tasks required for each position, the foundation for curriculum development can be solidly established.

The curriculum system clearly defines its training objectives, guided by a career-oriented approach and aligned with the "application-focused, undergraduate-level" positioning of private universities. It aims to cultivate applied design professionals who possess both the theoretical foundation of undergraduate-level design, exceptional professional design skills, distinctive design capabilities, and strong career development potential. These individuals will be equipped to meet the demands of core positions in the design industry while also demonstrating innovative thinking and the potential for career advancement.

To establish distinctive positioning for the curriculum system, we should integrate school-based resources with regional characteristics. This includes developing a 'cultural heritage + design' focus by leveraging regional intangible cultural heritage, creating a 'cultural and creative product design' focus through regional cultural and creative industries, and establishing a 'customized enterprise design' focus by utilizing school-enterprise collaboration resources. These distinctive orientations should be deeply aligned with occupational demands to prevent any disconnect between the curriculum's features and professional requirements.

3.2. Aligning Job Competencies with Curriculum Structure Optimization

Guided by occupational competency standards and aligned with institutional characteristics, this approach breaks away from the traditional linear curriculum structure of "public foundation courses + professional foundation courses + specialized courses" to establish a modular, tiered, distinctive, and practice-oriented framework. This system seamlessly integrates job competency development with specialized training. The curriculum architecture comprises five interconnected modules: public foundation courses, professional foundation courses, core professional courses, vocational specialty courses, and progressive practical courses. Each module operates independently while maintaining organic connections, progressively cultivating students' comprehensive competencies[5].

The General Education Module emphasizes "competency and universality," building upon the national curriculum while incorporating courses tailored to design majors and private undergraduate students. It includes vocational literacy, innovation and entrepreneurship, communication skills, and industry awareness to strengthen students 'comprehensive professional competence and undergraduate-level general education, laying a solid foundation for specialized studies. The Professional Foundation Module focuses on "specialization and practicality," offering core courses such as design sketching, design color theory, three major components, design software fundamentals, and design theory. These courses reinforce students' design fundamentals, cultivate essential design thinking and skills, and prepare them for subsequent vocational skill development and specialized competencies.

The Professional Core Curriculum Module emphasizes "job-course integration and vocational orientation," developed through university-industry collaboration to align with core competency standards for design professions. It offers specialized courses including Brand Design, Product Form Design, Interior Space Design, and Digital Media Design, ensuring students acquire essential job-specific skills and establish preliminary career alignment. The Vocational

Characteristic Curriculum Module, highlighting "distinctiveness and occupational relevance," serves as the core feature of the curriculum system. Tailored to the program's unique positioning and industry demands, it features courses such as "Intangible Cultural Heritage + Design" (covering application, element extraction, and development of cultural heritage products) and "Cultural Creative Product Design" (including planning, regional cultural design, and market-oriented approaches). This module fosters the integration of specialized skills with professional competencies.

The progressive practical curriculum module emphasizes "practicality and professionalism," spanning the entire talent development process. It comprises three tiers: foundational practice (course training and design workshop operations), specialized practice (corporate awareness internships and professional skill training), and comprehensive practice (enterprise project implementation, on-the-job internships, and graduation projects). These tiers progressively enhance students' professional competencies and distinctive design application capabilities.

3.3. Integrating Professional and Distinctive Features to Reconstruct Curriculum Content

The core of the curriculum system is the course content, which should be reconstructed and optimized with the dual orientation of job tasks and distinctive positioning, abandoning the content that is disconnected from the practice of occupation and too theoretical, and realizing the integration of occupation elements, the empowerment of distinctive elements, and the integration of theory and practice.

Aligning with professional roles and updating course content: Integrate the latest design technologies, industry standards, and job-specific tasks into curriculum materials, replacing outdated theoretical and practical content. For example, incorporate trending topics like new media design and short video production into visual communication design courses, while introducing cutting-edge technologies such as 3D printing and smart manufacturing in product design courses to ensure curriculum keeps pace with industry developments. Developing distinctive content through integration: Incorporate institutional characteristics, regional cultural features, and industry-academia collaboration resources to create a unique curriculum system for private undergraduate programs. This includes embedding regional intangible cultural heritage elements and local cultural symbols into design training, while integrating real-world design projects and industry standards from partner enterprises into core and specialized courses. This approach enables students to master specialized design skills and meet actual corporate design requirements. Streamlining theoretical content and strengthening practice integration: Tailor courses to the learning characteristics and career needs of private undergraduate students by simplifying abstract theoretical content. Combine theoretical knowledge with practical case studies and distinctive design examples to achieve "theory-practice integration." For instance, design theory courses should use classic professional projects and signature design works as case studies to help students understand theories through practical analysis, avoiding empty theoretical lectures.

4. Implementation Strategies of Characteristic Curriculum System for Private Undergraduate Design Majors under the Guidance of Vocational Orientation

4.1. Deepening School-Enterprise Collaboration to Establish a Dual-Subject Implementation Mechanism

The school-enterprise cooperation is the core guarantee of the implementation of the characteristic curriculum system under the guidance of the vocational orientation, which needs to break the single implementation mode in the school and construct the implementation mechanism of "school-enterprise dual subject", so as to realize the sharing of resources and the co-cultivation of talents.

Jointly building a school-enterprise collaborative teaching team: This team comprises core faculty members from the university and seasoned design professionals with technical expertise from enterprises. Instructors from the university deliver theoretical knowledge and foundational skills, while industry mentors guide practical vocational training, specialized design operations, and corporate project supervision, ensuring seamless integration between theoretical and

practical education.

Jointly establish on-campus and off-campus practical teaching platforms: On-campus, design workshops and training laboratories are built to align with vocational roles and distinctive positioning, providing hardware support for practical teaching. Off-campus, practical teaching bases are co-established with partner enterprises, offering students authentic professional design scenarios and specialized practice platforms to engage in real-world projects. Jointly develop and implement assessment plans: Both parties collaboratively formulate implementation plans, teaching programs, and evaluation criteria for the distinctive curriculum system, ensuring alignment with vocational requirements and training objectives. The assessment criteria balance theoretical knowledge, vocational skills, and specialized competencies, enabling joint evaluation by both institutions.

4.2. Innovating Teaching Models to Deepen the Integration of Job, Course, Competition, and Certification

By leveraging the practical and innovative nature of design disciplines, we develop diversified teaching models to deepen the integration of "job-course-competition-certification" systems, enabling students to enhance their professional skills and distinctive competencies through varied learning environments. We implement "theory-practice integration" and "project-based" pedagogy: classrooms are set up in on-campus design workshops, training bases, and corporate production facilities to achieve seamless "teaching-learning-practice" integration, allowing students to acquire knowledge and skills through hands-on experience. Using real corporate design projects and specialized design initiatives as platforms, we conduct project-based instruction where students work in teams to complete the entire process from design research and conceptualization to final product development, thereby cultivating their collaborative project management and practical design capabilities.

Promote the integrated implementation of "position-course-competition-certification": Combine vocational skill level standards, design discipline competition requirements, and corporate job tasks with curriculum implementation, enabling students to simultaneously prepare for certification exams, competition readiness, and practical job roles during course study. This approach leverages competitions to enhance learning and certifications to boost capabilities, thereby improving students' vocational competitiveness and distinctive design skills.

Developing blended online-offline teaching scenarios: By leveraging the institution's online teaching platform, we create integrated online course resources incorporating professional case studies and distinctive materials, including micro-lectures, instructional videos, design case libraries, and practical training manuals. This approach combines self-directed online learning with hands-on offline instruction, extending the scope of teaching to meet students' personalized learning needs.

4.3. Strengthening Faculty Development to Build a Dual-qualified Teaching Team

The faculty team serves as the core talent support for implementing the curriculum system. It should be developed around vocational orientation and distinctive positioning to build a "dual-qualified" teaching team that combines undergraduate-level teaching competence, excellent professional practice skills, and specialized design teaching capabilities. To strengthen faculty development, schools should arrange on-the-job training for in-house teachers at partner enterprises and involve them in real-world design projects to enhance their professional practice and industry relevance. Additionally, organizing teachers to participate in specialized design training and intangible cultural heritage design workshops will improve their specialized design teaching skills. Conducting vocational education teaching method training will further enhance teachers' ability to cultivate applied talents.

The institution recruits industry-specific talents, including veteran designers, intangible cultural heritage inheritors, and cultural innovation experts, to serve as part-time faculty members. This initiative strengthens the teaching team by integrating cutting-edge industry insights and distinctive design methodologies into classroom instruction, addressing the gap between academic pedagogy and practical industrial experience. A performance-based evaluation system is established, incorporating faculty participation in industry-academia collaboration, practical teaching, and specialized

curriculum development. Outstanding educators receive recognition and incentives, fostering their enthusiasm and proactive engagement in curriculum system implementation.

4.4. Improve the evaluation system and establish a multi-dimensional implementation evaluation mechanism

The scientific evaluation mechanism is the key to guarantee the quality of curriculum system implementation and improve the educational effect. It is necessary to break the traditional single evaluation mode of "exam results as the core" and construct the multi-dimensional evaluation system of "professional ability as the core, characteristic quality as the focus, multiple participation, process and results combined".

Clarify the multi-stakeholder evaluation framework by establishing a collaborative system involving "in-house faculty + industry mentors + professional experts + student self-assessment and peer review". In-house faculty evaluate theoretical knowledge and practical skills, while industry mentors assess vocational competencies, job fit, and application of distinctive design concepts. Professional experts evaluate the technical expertise and innovative aspects of design projects, and students develop self-reflection and team evaluation skills through peer assessment. The comprehensive evaluation covers theoretical knowledge, vocational skills, distinctive competencies, professional ethics, and innovation capabilities, with emphasis on assessing students 'practical job performance and unique design abilities to ensure holistic evaluation outcomes. Integrate process and outcome evaluations by combining them organically. Process evaluation spans the entire teaching cycle, assessing classroom participation, practical operations, project progress, and daily performance in corporate settings. Outcome evaluation occurs at course completion and graduation stages, assessing students' comprehensive design capabilities and learning achievements to ensure objective and comprehensive results.

5. Conclusion

The development of a distinctive curriculum system for private undergraduate design programs, guided by vocational orientation, serves as a pivotal strategy for private universities to achieve applied talent cultivation goals, align with industry demands, and overcome homogenization challenges. This initiative must center on occupational requirements, adhering to principles of vocational core competencies, curriculum-job integration, characteristic empowerment, and differentiated development. Through three key dimensions—clarifying course objectives, optimizing structures, and reconstructing content—the program aims to establish a curriculum system that demonstrates clear vocational focus, prominent institutional characteristics, and deep integration of theory and practice.

The implementation of the curriculum system requires deepening school-enterprise collaboration, establishing a "dual-subject" implementation mechanism, innovating teaching models, promoting the deep integration of "job-course-competition-certification" (a framework combining professional roles, courses, competitions, and certifications), strengthening the development of "dual-qualified" faculty, and improving a multi-dimensional evaluation system to ensure the effective implementation of the curriculum. For private undergraduate design programs, only by taking vocational orientation as the core, leveraging distinctive curriculum systems, deeply integrating school-enterprise resources, and enhancing practical teaching can they cultivate applied design talents with undergraduate-level theoretical literacy, superb professional skills, and distinctive design capabilities. This will provide talent support for regional design industry development, highlight the distinctive features and value of private undergraduate institutions, and promote their high-quality, specialized development.

Funding

(2025 Private Education Society Project) Development and Implementation Path of Characteristic Curriculum System for

Private Vocational Undergraduate Design Specialty: An Innovation Study on School-Based Practice-Oriented Education Model (Project No.: CANQN250194)

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

[1] Wang XY, 2025, Research on the Application of VR Technology in Art and Design Majors Based on Industry-Education Integration. *Screen Printing*, (12): 142-144.

[2] Ruan ZC, Lu WJ, Chen QL, 2025, Research on the Training Strategies for High-Quality Technical and Skilled Talents in Product Art Design under the Background of Industry-Education Integration. *Heilongjiang Education (Higher Education Research and Evaluation)*, (12): 11-14.

[3] Liu Y, 2025, Innovative Exploration and Practice of Industry-Education Integration in Environmental Design under the Background of Rural Revitalization. *Modern Horticulture*, 48(10): 195-197.

[4] Wang Y, 2025, Exploring the Path of Curriculum Reform for Environmental Art Design in Vocational Undergraduate Institutions under the Background of Deepening Industry-Education Integration. *Journal of Yanbian Institute of Education*, 39(05): 12-16.

[5] Ma JD, 2025, High-quality Talent Cultivation in Environmental Design under the Background of Industry-Education Integration. *Shanghai Fashion*, (12): 123-125.