

# Research on the Status Quo and High-Quality Development of Sino-Foreign Cooperative Education in China

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**Abstract:** Faced with unprecedented changes in the world, China has chosen to continue expanding its opening-up and actively cooperate with other countries. Internationalization of education is one of the important directions for the future development of universities. Since the reform and opening-up, a series of Sino-foreign cooperative education policies have been successively released, forming a relatively systematic and complete policy system. Under the promotion of policies, Chinese universities actively engage in Sino-foreign cooperative education, with increasingly frequent educational exchanges and a clear trend towards internationalization. The scale of Sino-foreign cooperative education is also constantly expanding. It is worthy to explore how to draw on advanced teaching experience from overseas, continue to promote Sino-foreign cooperative education, and improve the quality of Sino-foreign cooperative education.

**Keywords:** Internationalization of education; Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools; High-quality development

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## 1. The status quo of Sino-foreign cooperative education in China

Faced with unprecedented changes in the world, China has chosen to continue expanding its opening-up and actively cooperate with other countries. Internationalization of education is one of the important directions for university research and reform. The goal of Sino-foreign cooperative education is to comprehensively enhance the internationalization level of China's higher education and promote the high-quality development of China's higher education industry by introducing different teaching modes, high-quality curriculum systems, and abundant teaching resources from foreign universities, drawing on the educational philosophy and teaching quality evaluation standards of foreign universities. Since the promulgation of the Provisional Regulations on Sino-Foreign Cooperative Education in 1995, China has actively carried out Sino-foreign cooperation in various levels and teaching activities. As of now, there are a total of 1297 Sino-foreign undergraduate cooperative education institutions and projects in China, covering 30 provinces and establishing cooperative relationships with 13 major countries and regions abroad. Sino-foreign cooperative education has become an important

component of higher education. In the new situation of global change, educational exchanges between China and foreign countries are becoming increasingly frequent, and the trend of education internationalization is evident. The scale of Sino-foreign cooperative education is also constantly expanding. It is worthy to explore how to draw on advanced teaching experience from overseas, actively carry out bilingual teaching reform and practice, continue to deepen Sino-foreign cooperative education, and improve the quality of Sino-foreign cooperative education [1].

### 1.1. The overall scale of Sino-foreign cooperative education in China

There are two main forms of Sino-foreign cooperative education in China. Firstly, the establishment of Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions in China specifically refers to the cooperation between foreign and Chinese educational institutions within China to establish educational institutions with Chinese citizens as the main enrollment targets; The second form is Sino-foreign cooperative education projects, which specifically refer to educational and teaching activities carried out by Chinese and foreign educational institutions in cooperation with Chinese citizens as the main enrollment targets in disciplines, majors, courses, etc., without establishing educational institutions.

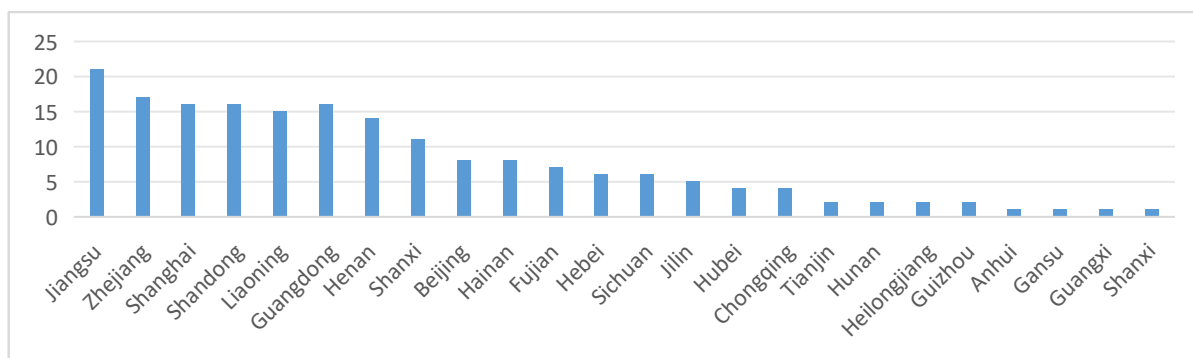
This article analyzes the status quo of Sino-foreign cooperative education in China based on the undergraduate level data from the Supervision Information Platform of the Ministry of Education for Sino-Foreign Cooperative Education in December 2023. In 2023, there were a total of 186 undergraduate Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions (including those in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan regions) in China, with 1111 undergraduate Sino-foreign cooperative education projects. From the distribution of provinces and cities, Henan Province has a total of 153 cooperative educational institutions and projects, ranking first in the country. Jiangsu Province ranks second with a total of 125, while Shandong Province ranks third with a total of 111. Shanghai, Jilin, Hubei, Liaoning, Zhejiang, Heilongjiang, and Hebei respectively rank fourth to tenth (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Total number of Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions and projects in each province (Unit: number)

Province	Number	Province	Number	Province	Number
Jiangsu	104	Shanxi	23	Hubei	65
Zhejiang	50	Beijing	38	Chongqing	30
Shanghai	64	Hainan	12	Tianjin	25
Shandong	95	Fujian	25	Hunan	37
Liaoning	53	Hebei	43	Heilongjiang	64
Guangdong	23	Sichuan	22	Guizhou	14
Henan	139	Jilin	72	Anhui	24
Gansu	4	Guangxi	23	Shanxi	2
Jiangxi	26	Xinjiang	2	Yunnan	19
Neimenggu	9	Ningxia	3	Qinghai	1

Data source: Information platform for supervision of Sino-foreign cooperative education

As shown in Figure 1, in terms of the total number of Sino-foreign cooperative education



**Figure 1.** Distribution of the number of Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions in each province in 2023 (Unit: number)

Data source: Information platform for supervision of Sino-foreign cooperative education institutions, Jiangsu Province ranked first in 2023, with a total of 21, Zhejiang Province ranked second with 17, and Shanghai, Shandong, and Guangdong Provinces tied for third place with 16 (Figure 1).

In 2023, there were a total of 139 Sino-foreign cooperative education projects in Henan Province, ranking first, while Jiangsu Province ranked second with 104 projects. Shandong Province, Jilin Province, and Hubei Province ranked third to fifth, with 95, 72, and 65 projects respectively.

## 1.2. Regional distribution of Sino-foreign cooperative education in China

The regional distribution of Sino-foreign cooperative education in China exhibits obvious characteristics, that is, the number of cooperative institutions and projects in the eastern coastal provinces is the highest, such as Jiangsu Province, Shandong Province, Liaoning Province, Zhejiang Province, and Shanghai City. Jiangsu Province has the highest number of cooperative education institutions in the country; Central provinces take second place, such as Henan and Hubei Provinces, with Henan Province ranking first in the country in terms of Sino-foreign cooperative education programs. The number of cooperative education in the western region is relatively small, and the overall trend is decreasing from the east to the west. This characteristic is highly consistent with the degree of opening-up to the outside world in the eastern, central, and western regions. The development status of Sino-foreign cooperative education in these three regions reflects to a certain extent the economic and social development and degree of opening-up in the three regions <sup>[2,3]</sup>.

## 1.3. Distribution of Sino-foreign cooperative universities in China

The main Sino-foreign cooperative universities in China include the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Soros, South Korea, Germany, Canada, and others. According to 2023 data, as shown in Table 2, the vast majority of undergraduate partner universities are located in OECD (The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries. From the perspective of cooperative project majors, economics majors account for a relatively large proportion, such as finance, international economics and trade, international economics, etc., while management majors include financial management, accounting, information management, agricultural and forestry economic management, information management, etc.; There are also many collaborations in engineering majors such as mechanical engineering, automation, electrical engineering, communication engineering, and computer and information engineering; There is relatively little cooperation in agriculture, art, philosophy, education, and science <sup>[4]</sup>. In addition, with the continuous development of computer and information technology, new majors such as big data, digital media, and the Internet of Things are gradually emerging.

**Table 2.** Distribution of major cooperative foreign universities in Sino-foreign cooperative education in 2023  
(Unit: number)

Country	Number	Country	Number	Country	Number
America	266	France	29	New Zealand	29
Britain	204	Japan	13	Italy	31
Australia	102	Russia	109	South Korea	80
Canada	51	Netherlands	10	Germany	55
Ireland	38				

Data source: Information platform for supervision of Sino-foreign cooperative education

## 2. Problems in the development of Sino-foreign cooperative education in China

### 2.1. Management issues of teachers in Sino-foreign cooperative universities

Sino-foreign cooperative educational institutions and projects are committed to fully utilizing high-quality educational resources at home and abroad, promoting advanced educational concepts abroad, and hiring outstanding foreign teachers to undertake important teaching tasks, in order to fully broaden students' international perspectives.

However, this also poses challenges to the management and assessment of teachers in cooperative universities. For example, cooperative teachers also participate in education related to moral education in universities. Due to the fact that foreign teachers are recruited globally, with different cultural backgrounds and significant individual differences, the school is unable to timely and comprehensively grasp the ideological understanding and moral cultivation level of foreign teachers <sup>[5]</sup>. The research on moral education and talent cultivation in Sino-foreign cooperative education also shows that foreign teachers in cooperative universities have a high mobility. Unlike Chinese teachers, most foreign teachers are recruited globally, and different foreign teachers may take on the same courses every semester. The probability of the same foreign teacher teaching the same course continuously in the same university is lower, resulting in foreign teachers not being familiar with and understanding the school culture and basic student situation. Due to high mobility, schools invest heavily in the management of foreign teachers.

### 2.2. Lack of overall coordination in the development of Sino-foreign cooperative education

In terms of the layout structure of Sino-foreign education, the geographical distribution characteristics are obvious. The scale and level of cooperative education in eastern coastal provinces far exceed those in central and western provinces. The shortage of educational resources in central and western regions further exacerbates the imbalance of cooperative education resources. In terms of professional setting, talent cultivation mode, and talent cultivation quality, the connection between professional setting, school characteristics, and regional economic advantages is poor. The talent cultivation model is relatively fixed and lacks distinctive innovation. There is poor connection between cooperative education and local economic development in terms of talent demand, and the quality of talent cultivation needs to be improved.



### **3. Suggestions for the development of Sino-foreign cooperative education in China**

#### **3.1. Optimizing the management level of teachers in cooperative universities**

Universities should strictly screen foreign teachers, regularly provide appropriate education and training to teaching staff, and conduct comprehensive evaluations of all teaching staff every academic year, and establish elimination management mechanisms. Various collective activities should be carried out to improve the sense of integration of foreign teachers, strengthen the collective cohesion of the teaching team, guide foreign teachers to learn more about Chinese history and excellent traditional culture, and subtly enhance the recognition of foreign teachers <sup>[5,6]</sup>.

#### **3.2. Strengthening the overall planning and coordination of cooperative education**

We should focus on regional development, encourage and support universities in the central and western regions to carry out Sino-foreign cooperative education, and emphasize fairness and regional coordination. To maximize the policy guidance effect, we need to solve the problem of imbalance between the eastern and western parts of Sino-foreign cooperative education from the beginning, guide educational resources to tilt from the east to the west, and further coordinate the balanced development of educational regions. We need to innovate talent cultivation models, establish characteristic majors based on the characteristics of different regions, achieve precise docking with the talents needed for local economic development, and cultivate professional, high-quality, and internationalized talents.

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### **Disclosure statement**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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