

# Role Positioning and Ability Construction of International Student Counselors in Chinese Universities from the Perspective of Cross-cultural Education

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**Abstract:** The globalization process is accelerating, and the demand for talents with cross-cultural communication ability is also increasing, which requires the traditional knowledge teaching to be transformed into the cultivation of cross-cultural critical thinking ability, and puts forward new requirements for the ability of college counselors. In this regard, the following explores the role positioning and capability building strategies of international student counselors in Chinese universities from the perspective of cross-cultural education. It clarifies the roles of university counselors as cross-cultural educators, cross-cultural managers, and cross-cultural communicators. Through activities such as professional skills competitions and cross-cultural academic seminars, it systematically enhances cross-cultural communication skills and professional competencies in multicultural environments.

**Keywords:** Intercultural education; College counselors; Role positioning; Capacity building

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## 1. Introduction

The new era emphasizes the cultivation of globally competent talents. As cross-cultural educators, university international student counselors must undertake systematic educational responsibilities. By continuously enhancing their professional competencies and ethical standards, they can clearly define their educational mission in an open global context. This approach not only advances the professionalization of university counselor teams but also strengthens international educational collaboration.

## **2. Role positioning of international student counselors in Chinese universities from the perspective of cross-cultural education**

### **2.1. Cross-cultural educators**

From the perspective of cross-cultural education, university counselors of international students are responsible for helping international students quickly adapt to the learning and living environment, clarifying their identity as cross-cultural educators, and focusing on educating them about China's laws and regulations, school rules, national conditions, and school-specific circumstances <sup>[1]</sup>. Meanwhile, to better assist international students in adapting to cultural differences, we will focus on explaining dietary and etiquette norms through the example of Sino-German cultural differences, helping German students adjust more quickly. Additionally, it is essential to promote China's excellent traditional culture, cultivate international students' cross-cultural thinking awareness, and enhance their cross-cultural understanding capabilities. On this foundation, systematic theoretical teaching can help international students adapt more effectively to new environments.

### **2.2. Cross-cultural managers**

College counselors also manage daily affairs for international students, including providing consultations, information, and organizing cultural and sports activities. This requires them to coordinate cross-cultural conflicts, which demands cross-cultural adaptability, understanding and adapting to values, behavioral norms, and communication styles across different cultural backgrounds to better address contradictions and conflicts arising from cultural differences. Additionally, counselors must possess cultural sensitivity, deeply understand the cultural connotations of both Chinese and German cultures, and identify cultural differences and potential conflicts, such as individualism versus collectivism. German culture is centered on individualism, emphasizing personal abilities and achievements, while China places greater emphasis on teamwork and collective interests. This requires counselors to demonstrate cultural sensitivity <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **2.3. Cross-cultural communicators**

From the perspective of cross-cultural education, as a bridge for Sino-German cultural communication, international student counselors in Chinese universities need to possess certain cross-cultural communication skills, master cross-cultural communication techniques, and quickly adapt to the differences between Chinese and German education systems <sup>[3]</sup>. It is essential to not only understand the cultural background of German students but also to gain a deep insight into the differences between China and Germany in terms of values, social habits, and etiquette norms. While respecting cultural differences and avoiding misunderstandings that may lead to conflicts, it is equally important to effectively convey China's cultural values in cross-cultural communication. This approach will better facilitate cultural integration between both sides, promote cross-cultural exchange, and enable flexible responses to new challenges in Sino-German cross-cultural communication with an open mindset.

## **3. Ability construction methods of international student counselors in Chinese universities from the perspective of cross-cultural education**

### **3.1. Regularly organize specialized training activities**

From the perspective of cross-cultural education, the capacity building of university student counselors in China can adopt regular training programs, combining international student affairs practices to enhance their professional competence and expertise, thereby enabling them to better perform their role as cross-cultural

managers <sup>[4]</sup>. The process includes training on regulations and culture, professional skills (daily management, emergency response, mental health education), language and communication skills, and personalized service. Taking the training of personalized service capabilities as an example, how to provide personalized consultation and assistance based on the cultural background of German students, and offer counselors various consultation cases during the training process, such as adaptation to religious beliefs, and provide interpretation services on legal and religious policies regarding the religious management regulations of China that German students may have, requiring counselors to understand the religious needs of German international students in advance during the training process and provide cross-cultural communication and psychological support services <sup>[5]</sup>. In this case, the counselor's personalized service ability is significantly enhanced, which can provide better support for international students in life and study, and help the counselor's intercultural communication ability and intercultural affairs management ability.

### 3.2. Organizing cross-cultural academic seminars

To enhance the capacity of international student counselors in Chinese universities, cross-cultural academic symposiums can be organized. These symposiums should analyze the essential cross-cultural communication skills, cultural adaptability, and international education methodologies required from four perspectives: intercultural communication, intercultural education, intercultural management, and intercultural research. By sharing practical training experiences, counselors can continuously improve their professional expertise and international service capabilities through interactive exchanges <sup>[6]</sup>. Furthermore, cross-cultural academic symposiums may adopt a hybrid online-offline format (**Figure 1**), enabling scholars to examine international student education management from an academic standpoint. This approach facilitates the identification of research topics and methodologies, thereby strengthening the integration of theoretical research with practical implementation. Regarding the educational management issue of cultural adaptation and integration, the academic research topic was determined as “cross-cultural integration.” By adopting the survey research method, practical investigations were conducted among international students from different countries to understand the difficulties in cross-cultural adaptation, such as differences in language, living habits, and values compared to China. Through these investigations, the challenges in cultural adaptation for international students were identified, enabling the proposal of solutions based on the actual issues encountered during their cultural adaptation process. The aim is to enhance the management efficiency of international students from multiple perspectives <sup>[7]</sup>.



**Figure 1.** Cross-cultural academic symposiums are conducted both online and offline.

### 3.3. Organizing a career competency competition

The construction of international student counselors in our university needs to hold the corresponding professional quality ability competition, and constantly improve the ability of counselors to adapt to the multicultural environment, while promoting learning by competition. This process simulates various international scenarios, enabling counselors to respond proactively in diverse cross-cultural situations and evaluate their cross-cultural service capabilities. Through this competency assessment, counselors can identify gaps in handling international affairs via post-competition analysis, thereby continuously refining their emergency response skills and enhancing adaptability to cross-cultural environments <sup>[8]</sup>. For example, in a cross-cultural setting where German students have established practices like fixed prayer times and Sunday observances, what arrangements should the counselor make? In response to this cross-border scenario, the participating counselor made the following arrangements (**Table 1**).

**Table 1.** Specific performance of counselors in the competition

| International scenarios                        | Counselor arrangements  |
|--|---|
| International Students' Fixed Prayer Day Event | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Understanding the Needs of International Students on Religious Activities Through the Admission Questionnaire and Individual Interview</li><li>2. Based on understanding the needs, arrange time and space reasonably, coordinate with the teaching time of professional courses, and provide a quiet private space for prayer, and inform other students to avoid disturbing</li><li>3. Make arrangements for food and drink. If you have dietary restrictions due to religion, you need to help the canteen to provide meals that are in line with your habits in advance.</li><li>4. Provide psychological support services, as international students may easily feel lonely or experience cultural conflicts due to differences between their religious beliefs and China's mainstream culture.</li></ol> |

During this competency assessment, expert judges evaluate counselors' responses to various scenarios, such as addressing international students' psychological needs, building trust, and providing tailored support in daily management. This approach effectively enhances learning and critical thinking through competition, ultimately improving counselors' professional competence <sup>[9]</sup>.

## 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, from the perspective of cross-cultural education, international student counselors in Chinese universities should clearly define their roles and enhance their adaptability to diverse environments through participation in multicultural activities. This approach enables them to provide more personalized services for international students, thereby significantly improving their management efficiency and facilitating cross-cultural communication.

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