Journalism education survey: China

Compiled by Ke Guo & Peiqin Chen,
Shanghai International Studies University, School of Journalism & Communication

1. **What is the framework of higher education and situating journalism education in that?**

Higher education is on the whole regulated by the Ministry of Education in Beijing, the capital city, and its local subordinating higher education administrations in 29 provinces. National universities are under direct administration of the Ministry of Education while local higher education universities are administered by local higher education administrations in 29 provinces in terms of regular funding, supervision of higher education and appointment of university top management. . Journalism and communication education is one of the first-tier discipline of social sciences ever since 1998, before which journalism was only a second-tier concentration under "literature."

As it is the case all the disciplines in China, all the programs at MA and Ph.D. levels are approved and supervised by special evaluation groups under the State Council.

2. **What are the levels at which journalism education is offered?**

Journalism and communication programs in China offer four levels of education: undergraduate, MA, Ph.D and post-doctoral positions. Traditionally, at the graduate level, which includes MA and Ph.D. degrees, only two degrees in journalism and communication concentrations are offered. Nowadays, they have come to include advertising and broadcast and other concentrations as well. At the undergraduate level, BA degrees are offered in journalism (print), radio & TV journalism, advertising, editing & publishing, digital publishing, new media and communication.

3. **How many institutions are offering these programmes and at what level?**

According to the 2015 Report provided by the semi-official National Journalism and Mass Communication Discipline Supervisory Committee, 637 colleges and universities in China have offered a total of 1073 undergraduate programs in journalism (304), broadcasting journalism (224), advertising (363), editing and publishing (80), digital publishing (5), new media (43) and communication (54) in 2015. Meanwhile, the number of doctoral programs in journalism and communication is estimated to have exceeded 21 and that of MA programs in journalism and communication (including advertising) has amounted to at least 180.

4. **What is the national intake of students at different levels?**

The intake of journalism and communication programs in Chinese universities vary. At the BA level, the intake ranges from about 60 in public universities to about 300 in private institutions. The MA student intake ranges from 20 to more than 120 while the intake of Ph.D. students varies from 10 to about 30. On the whole, Chinese universities are now controlling their intake of students in an effort to improve overall educational quality.

5. **What are the main components of the curricula at different levels?**

The main components of a BA program include 30% core course in journalism and communication, which may include introductory courses on media & society and courses on journalistic writing and editing and production skills, ethics and laws, internship, a graduation paper or report as well as courses on social sciences, sports and computer skills. Most MA and Ph.D. programs offer compulsory courses on journalism and communication theories and research methods, and courses related with different concentrations such as journalism, advertising, public relations, communication. On the whole, most journalism and communication programs tend to be more theory-oriented in which instructors talk more while students practise less. However, a concurrent trend is more BA and MA programs are becoming practically oriented towards changing media practices.

6. **What is the response/attitude towards these programmes by professional journalists and media industry?**

As the intake of journalism and communication students has exceeded the overall need for Chinese media organizations in the past two decades, journalism and communication graduating students find it more difficult to be employed in traditional media organizations. More students find jobs at public relations and advertising companies and non-media companies or government departments. On the whole, students in bigger cities tend to be better qualitied for jobs and are received more positively by their employers as their universities are better equipped with quality faculty and facilities and more access to teaching resources. Journalism students from foreign language or technology-oriented universities find themselves in a competitive edge as they have skills in foreign languages or technology practices.

7. **Give a profile of the human resources involved in teaching/training in terms of permanent faculty and visiting faculty.**

Most journalism and communication schools now have full-time faculty members and visiting faculty as well, which may include media professionals and visiting foreign professors and experts. Most full-time faculty members have their MA and Ph.D. degrees that are earned in China or abroad. Younger faculty members are required to be trained for at least one year overseas before promotion to associate or full professorship. Meanwhile, faculty members are also encouraged to work in media organizations for short periods of time so as to ensure their own media experience and skills.

8. **Provide a short assessment of journalism education in your country.**

Journalism and communication education is still one of the booming disciplines in China. After a massive expansion since the mid-1990s, more universities are concentrating on recruiting more quality faculty members and improving their teaching and research quality, as it is not only required by the Ministry of Education (via evaluation) but also by more Chinese parents who will otherwise send their children abroad. In the digital era, journalism and communication education programs in China are becoming more oriented towards ever-changing media practices and catering to needs of future employers.