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# A Comparative Study of Graduate Physical Education Teacher Preparation Program among Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan

## 中國內地，香港，臺灣地區高校體育研究生專業教師培養模式的比較研究

**Gao Lulu**

*Beijing Capital Sports University, Beijing, CHINA*

**Wu Ting**

*The Education University of Hong Kong*

**高綠路**

中國北京首都體育學院

**伍婷**

香港教育大學



### Abstract

The purposes of this study were to use the teacher preparation models of graduate programs from Capital Sports University, Education University of Hong Kong, and National Taiwan Normal University as examples, to analyze and compare the differences in the aspects of program development, aims of program, recruitment policies and curriculum system these four difference regions. The results of this study illustrated the diverse teacher preparation models from three different educational systems, cultures, and teacher preparation models, would greatly help experts to understand these differences, and learn from each other.

Key words: Comparison, physical education teacher preparation, graduate program curriculum

### 摘要

本研究以首都體育學院、香港教育大學、臺灣師範大學的體育專業研究生培養模式為例，從三所高校的發展歷程、培養目標、招生制度、課程體系四個方面做比較研究，從而分析和對比中國大陸與香港、臺灣地區高校體育專業研究生培養模式的差異及優缺點，通過比較與借鑒擁有“中西合璧”風格的香港、臺灣地區的體育學研究生教育方式，優化和改革中國大陸體育研究生教育的課程結構、內容、培養方式等措施，以提高我國體育專業研究生的教育品質。

關鍵字：體育專業 研究生 培養模式 比較與借鑒

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## Introduction

With a rapid increasing enrollment of postgraduate students in physical education (PE) in China, the program development and enhancement in line with the international development direction becomes important in terms of improving the students' quality. In order to promote PE graduate program in China with the direction of globalization, it is necessary to support students in integrating their experience with international trend in theory, practice and leadership in physical education. This study used a method of comparison to compare the program development and curriculum structure of the graduate program among different universities in Hong Kong, Taiwan and China, and to analyze and compare the differences in the aspects of program development, aims of program, recruitment policies and program curriculum among four different regions. The study anticipated a result that to describe the diverse teacher preparation models from four different educational systems and cultures, and expects these different teacher preparation models would greatly help professionals from four regions to understand these differences, and learn from each other.

## The History of Graduate PE Curriculum in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan

The Chinese higher education development has experienced more than 10 decades since Peking Imperial University founded in 1898. Although liberal education was taken much consideration during some periods in the history, specialized education still was a main tendency through this century as professional graduates were needed widely (Han, 2007).

As for the Capital Institute of Physical Education, postgraduate has to follow the education rules developed by the educational department of China, which is, the students can graduate only after finishing all the required classes from the graduate school. So the postgraduate students have to stay in the campus for three years to finish their required courses of the program.

The postgraduate education in the universities of Hong Kong has followed the British model, which is, students should finish their master program in one year, and choose the courses which interested them (Fan,

2007). So in the Hong Kong Institute of Education, graduate students can choose courses according to their interests and the second major. This makes the program design more flexible, and the cultivation time shortened for the master program. Also, the horizon will be broaden and ones scope of knowledge is about to be expanded as a postgraduate.

Along with the adjustment of economy structure in Taiwan, the postgraduate education has expanded their enrollment amount. Meanwhile, the rate of graduate student has also increased. It is a significant development for the postgraduate education in Taiwan. The National Taiwan Normal University came up with an objective which was "Promoting the globalization of higher education, improving the competitiveness of education". The goal is in accordance with the transformation of the educational system, globalization PE development requirements and the society development in Taiwan (Lei & Dong, 2009). Moreover, the graduate students in Taiwan have to learn both arts and science areas, such as Humanity, Sociology, and Nature which are basic and required courses. By a comprehensive study of all courses, an overall analysis ability and a kindness heart can be cultivated as a Taiwan postgraduate student for their future living. Also, it is a meaningful chance for the postgraduates to achieve an independent self-reflection ability. It does a great favor in helping them to adapt their future social roles and responsibility.

## Program Objectives

The official program objectives of these three universities could be found from their official website and documents. Here is the comparison below in Table 1.

If we search the common objectives throughout the three postgraduate programs, we can find out that no matter in which regions, postgraduate education consider humanism in the first place, and their overall aim at cultivating comprehensive students with high academic and research ability as the second place.

Meanwhile, there exists slightly difference between the four regions in the progress of postgraduate education. Compared with the Capital Institute of Physical Education, the universities in Hong Kong and Taiwan have more diverse cultivation goals on physical education major. The

cultivation goals were established according to the local economy and society demands first, so they regarded the theory studies as same important as practice ability to adjust to the marketing needs. Students' comprehensive ability cultivation such as courses in other filed is also important. But in Mainland China, the education system does not have such high contemporaneity. Compared with Hong Kong and Taiwan, the Capital Institute of Physical

Education in China lacks of a diversification in education progress and program arrangement. And their requests for the postgraduate students lack of critical spirit training, which is extremely important for the highly competitive times and complicated society. Moreover, the enrollment of postgraduate students in mainland china is increasing every year, which needs a contemporary reformation in education system.

**Table 1. Comparison of the Objectives between Three Universities.**

University	Program Objectives
Capital Institute of Physical Education	The Master Program is designed to provide a broad and strong base of understanding on Physical Education, to introduce basic theoretical and methodological knowledge in Physical Education, and to cultivate professional management in physical education area. (Introduction of Physical Education and Training Department, 2013)
The Hong Kong Institute of Education	The Master program is aimed at individuals who aspire to professional advancement in the Physical educational sector, and those who intend to strengthen their fecundation knowledge and deepen their study in Physical education. It is designed to support students in integrating their past experience with new insights in theory, practice and leadership. It also combines specialist study and a broad-based education in professional reflection, assessment and research methods. It provides flexible learning routes for students from different knowledge backgrounds. (Program Information, 2014)
The National Taiwan Normal University	The Master program focuses on discussing with wilder perspectives about the concepts of sport principles, games, actions, performances, health, recreations, body, and Sport Pedagogy in order to clarify sport pedagogical practices. The purpose stresses on curricula cultivation on teachers' proficiency and development of physical education, which aims to achieving the goal of cultivating high quality teachers. Professors corporately concentrate and elaborate their specialties. They apply diverse methodologies to research on the above issues. They attempt to connect with the world, and to raise the quality of Sport Pedagogy researches. (Sport Pedagogy, 2009)

### Program Type and Duration

According to variant program objectives and course arrangement, the type and duration of master students in

three universities are different. Here is the comparison below in Table 2.

**Table 2 Comparison of Master Program duration between the Three Universities.**

University	Type of Master graduate students	Program duration
Capital Institute of Physical Education	Full-Time Research student	2-3 years
	Full-Time Sports Professional student	2 years
The Hong Kong Institute of Education	Full-Time Research student	2 years
	Full-Time taught student	1 years
	Part-Time research student	3 years
	Part-Time taught student	2 years
The National Taiwan Normal University	Full-Time student	1-4 years
	Part-Time student	2-3 years

According to the above table, it is obvious that the type of Master Graduate students differs in different regions. In the Capital Institute of Physical Education, they only enroll full-time students for the physical education major which is divided into two types, research major and professional sports major. The division is depended on the different background of students. For example, a student who used to be a professional athlete. That student decides to be an educator in the future. He or she can choose the Full-Time Sports Professional master program. In another case, students who would like to do researches in the physical education area should choose Full-Time Research master program. But no part-time program was provided.

The physical postgraduate program in Hong Kong and Taiwan is more flexible. The type of the master student is established according to both the cultivation and the students' needs. So both full-time and part-time were included, meanwhile both research and taught programs. This is better for students who own a full-time job to choose the part-time program. And student who are academic-oriented could choose the research program. Moreover, the duration in these regions are more flexible for students, which makes a great convenience for their graduation.

Overall, universities in mainland China should make changes in both the type and duration of the master physical education program. Follow Hong Kong and Taiwan as examples, the duration of postgraduate studying should be given multiple choices according to the personal demands of each student.

### Admission Requirements

Admission requirements are totally different according to different regions under different education systems. Here is the comparison below in Table 3.

From the Table 3, it is easy to find that the admission requirements differs in each items. Although the final goal is to enroll students who have best professional abilities, the differences are obvious according to the three regions. First, the Capital Institute of Physical

Education has a clear requirement for age in the enrollment, while Hong Kong and Taiwan do not have this limit. This provides more opportunities for students in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Deeply speaking, the age limitation of graduate student in the Capital Institute of Physical Education is a sort of discrimination, which should be reformed. Meanwhile, although English is tested in three regions, only the enrollment in Hong Kong and Taiwan includes the international students. The enrollment in the Capital Institute of Physical Education does not include the international enrollment.

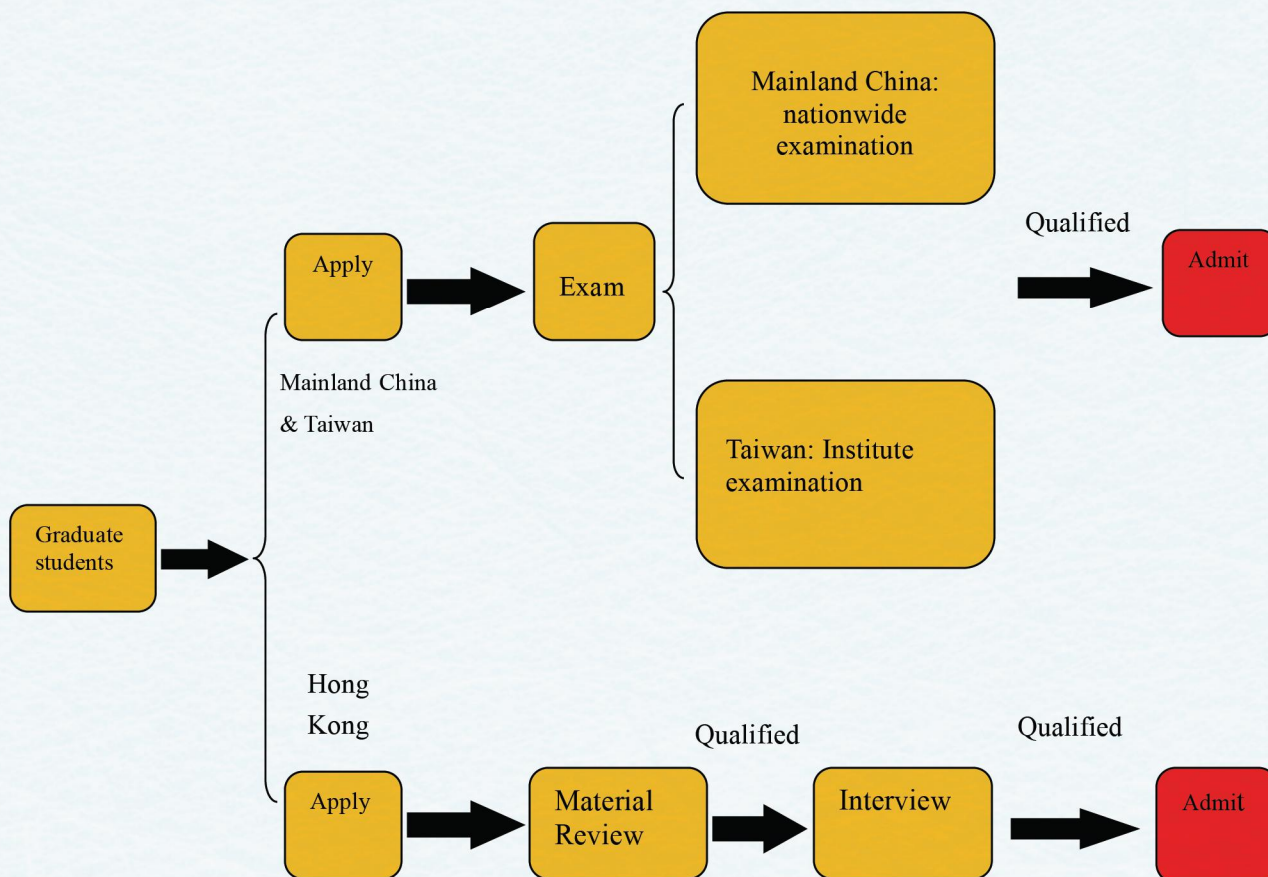
Moreover, the admission exam is included in the enrollment in mainland China and Taiwan but not in Hong Kong. This makes the enrollment in Hong Kong more flexible. It means more individual skills besides professional theories are considered, which could be used for references for Mainland China and Taiwan.

**Table 3. Comparison of Master Program Admission Requirements between the Three Universities.**

Admission requirements	Capital Institute of Physical Education	The Hong Kong Institute of Education	The National Taiwan Normal University
Age of students	Under 40 years old	N/A	N/A
Application deadline	November	May( Summer student) December (pring student)	March
Admission examination	January	N/A	March
Content of examination	Politics English Professional	N/A	Sport science Sports history Sport administration English Chinese
Reexamination	English Professional skills	Interviews	Interviews

**Enrollment Process**

**Figure 1. Flow chart of the enrollment process.**



The three regions have different enrollment process in postgraduate admission.

Firstly, about the examination system: the Capital institute of physical education implement the Chinese national graduate examination, which means all the applicants should attend the same examination. Their admission is depended on their own scores. This makes the enrollment progress equitable but lack of flexibility. The National Taiwan Normal University also adopts examination as the standard for enrollment. But the time when applicants attend the examination is flexible enough to arrange individually, so does the subject of examination, which makes it very convenient for applicants. In this way, the examination system can not only test the abilities of students in a comprehensive way but also be flexible enough to enroll the suitable candidate.

The second is about the submission materials. Neither the Capital Institute of Physical Education nor the National Taiwan Normal University has requirement of the GPA of applicants. Also, neither university requires recommendation letters. But for the Hong Kong Institute of Education, the enrollment standard includes both the qualified GPA and the recommendation letters. Only if the materials of applicant meet the requirement can it be delivered to the next level of reviewing. So the educational system in Hong Kong region regards the application materials of students very important. This process is a replacement of the examination in Mainland China and Taiwan regions.

Thirdly, the re-examination process. The re-examination are different in three regions. In the Capital Institute of Physical Education, the re-examination includes written tests, interviews and professional technical tests. It focuses more on the theoretical and professional background of students. Students who can't pass one subject of the re-examination cannot get the offer. As for the re-examination in Hong Kong Institute of Education, it is an interview between the applicants and the program manager. In this way the overall background of students could be investigated. As for the National Taiwan Normal University, there is no re-examination, applicants who past the first test can get the offer.

## Curriculum Design

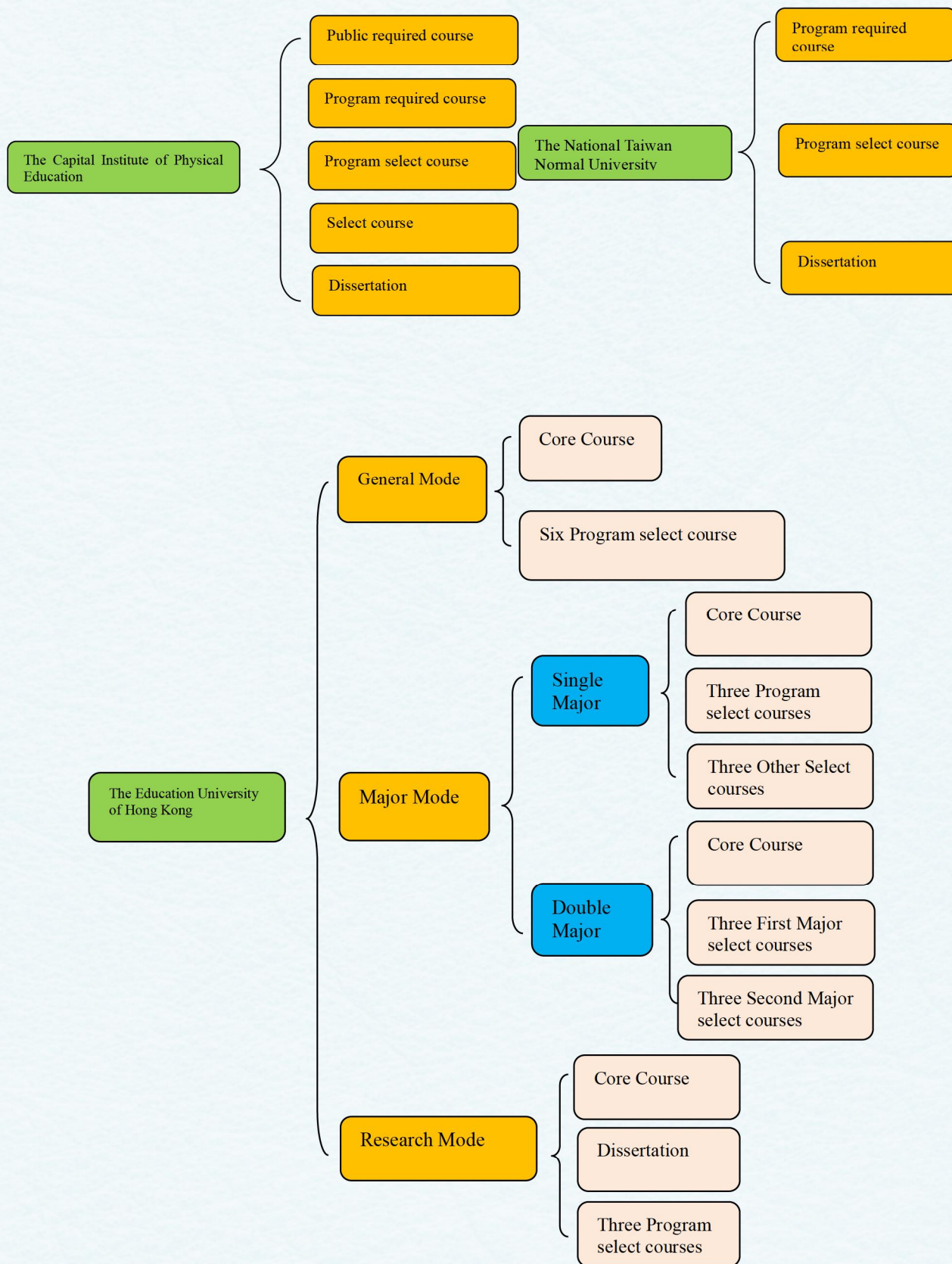
Curriculum design is a present of the educational concept in different universities. A comprehensive curriculum design including courses from different departments of a university can hence students' horizon and the knowledge. In this study, the different designs of curriculum from the three universities regions were analyzed.

First, core courses stand an important part in the curriculum no matter in any university. Because core courses help to build strong foundation for the further academic research of the graduate students. In the Capital Institute of Physical Education, the core courses are much more than elective courses. This design has both advantages and disadvantages for students after all. For advantages, students could get comprehensive foundations of the basic research skills according to the various amounts of core courses. But on the other side, for students themselves, they lack some chances in choosing different courses according to their interests. But for universities in Hong Kong and Taiwan regions, the elective courses are much more than core courses. Students select different kinds of courses across departments and programs. This curriculum design is depended on the interests of students. Also, students benefit from the teaching in various research areas.

As a conclusion, the different curriculum designs in each region are depended on their different cultivate objectives. The Capital Institute of Physical Education aims to cultivate students with strong academic ability while the Hong Kong Institute of Education and the National Taiwan Normal University focus on calculating students who control more applying practice skills. The different objectives decide the variances in both of the application and curriculum design.

The figure 2 below shows the structure of curriculum design in different universities. By comparing the difference in curriculum between the three regions of universities, it can be found that the curriculum design are obviously different in these three regions of universities.

Figure 2 Curriculum design of three universities.



The proportion of core course varies in different regions. In the Capital Institute of Physical Education, the amount of core courses are almost three times than selective courses. Students in this university would have most of their graduate study time spent on the core courses with no much opportunities to choose the select courses. As the cultivate graduate students to gain their basic research abilities and to prepare of the updated academic results.

According to the tables which demonstrate that objectives of the Capital Institute of Physical Education are mostly aimed on comprehensive basic knowledge study ability, especially the basics ability in research, which is designed in core courses (Li et al, 2010). On the other side, students don't have enough selective courses for them to choose according to their own interests. This is a shortage of curriculum design of the Capital Institute of Physical Education.

But for the other two universities in Hong Kong and Taiwan, they provide much more courses for student to choose. On one side, this respect the choices of students, and on the other side, with a boarder view of academic field, students could cultivate their critical thinking ability and cross-filed research topics.

Moreover, the course content in these three universities is also different from each other. First, the Capital Institute of Physical Education use textbooks in each course, and the teaching in each lesson is based on the foundation of the textbooks. For the content of each lesson, students mainly focus on studying the textbook and relative references, and there is not too much opportunities for them to express their own opinions, and there is no education of cultivating their ability of critical thinking. But in the Education University of Hong Kong, there is no definite textbook for students. The course was designed mostly student-oriented, students would do their own research according to the guideline which teachers offered.

**Table 4. Course Credit of the Three Universities.**

University	Total credit	Core course credit	Select course credit	Rate between core and select course
The Capital Institute of Physical Education	38	28	10	2.8 : 1
The National Taiwan Normal University	28	4	24	0.17 : 1
The Hong Kong Institute of Physical Education	24	15	9	1.67:1

And during this process, they could gain their own academic skills by using library and electronic resources. And the teacher will supervise their research during these self-studies. For Taiwan regions, according to the course design of the National Taiwan Normal University, they combine both textbooks and self-studies together. There are both teaching and guidance in class and research and group study autonomously under class. And this is an effect way for graduate students to gain their basic research abilities and to prepare of the updated academic results.

### Supervision System

As a graduate student, there will be supervisors for them to guide their own study areas individually. And the supervision system were different in three regions according to different cultivate objectives.

According to the supervision rules of the Capital Institute of Physical Education, each graduates student would have the one and only supervisor once they were enrolled by the university, and the supervisor will not be changed in the three years of studying as a graduate



students. Meanwhile, the research area of the student would be reply on the direction of his or her supervisor (Zhao et al 2010). There are both advantages and disadvantages in this supervision system. The advantages are that students get comprehensive supervision and guidance from their supervisor. A close relationship between supervisors and themselves is built. It is more effective for their academic studies and more easily to find and get achievements in their studies. However, they may lose autonomy, their own choices and interests in their research areas. Finally it results in less critical ideas in new research topic.

For the Hong Kong Institute of Education, they assign two supervisors for each students. The two supervisors are selected from two different research areas. Although there are main supervisor and co-supervisor, the students can receive different areas of guidance by these two supervisors (Fan, 2007). The responsibility of supervisors includes both topic choosing and content revising in each step of the dissertation writing.

In the National Taiwan Normal University, graduate students do not have fixed supervisors. They have options to join in different small teaching classes organized by different supervisors. Students get different supervision from them. Although each professor cannot take more than five students in supervision, the students can choose one or several supervisors according to their research areas (Yao, 2009). This makes the supervision more flexible and more benefits get by the students more in their own critical studies.

### **Dissertation Qualifying System**

According to different supervision systems, the qualifying system of graduate dissertation also differs in the three regions.

In the Capital Institute of Physical Education, two relative professors will be invited to evaluate the dissertation of graduate students. Double blind comment is adopted. Supervisors will give their comments and suggestions towards the topics and methodology and critical meanings of the graduate dissertation. Through an oral defense by the graduate students, committees will decide whether the dissertation could be passed or not. Only after the revising is made, can the student be graduated from the university. This process is

relatively strict in each step. The students usually spend quite much concentration during the reviewing of their dissertations.

For the Hong Kong Institute of Education, the dissertation of graduate student is reviewed by both the supervisors and the committees before the oral defense. Students have to adopt and combine comments from two or three supervisors for revising their final dissertation, which makes the dissertation more comprehensive and larger scope of knowledge covered.

As for the dissertation qualifying system in Taiwan regions, it includes four steps. Firstly, students should apply for the reviewing committees. Secondly, the academic developing center will organize and verify the approval examination and the dissertation. Thirdly, after the decision is made, the oral defense of the graduate student will start. Finally, for those who don't pass the oral defense, another chance will be given in the next semester.

After all, although different processes in dissertation qualifying system is produced in these three regions, the main form and organization are the same. For example, reviewing by supervisors, academic committees' comments and oral defense by students after that. In general speaking, all of the three regions cultivate the comprehensive abilities of the graduate students through the processes.

### **Discussion**

Through the comparison of the background, program objectives, duration, admission requirements, enrollment process, curriculum design, supervision system and dissertation qualifying system, both of the advantages and disadvantages in different regions have been found. In summary, all the causes for the difference in three regions are mainly depended on the difference of cultivate objectives. For example, the graduate students in mainland china would like to cultivate themselves into professional teachers in physical education areas after their graduation. So the cultivation system includes curriculum design, supervision and dissertation which mainly focuses on the professional and basic theoretic knowledge of students. But for Hong Kong and Taiwan regions, the objectives are to cultivate students who will be better adapt to the international academic field and ready to challenge the updated research. So for the

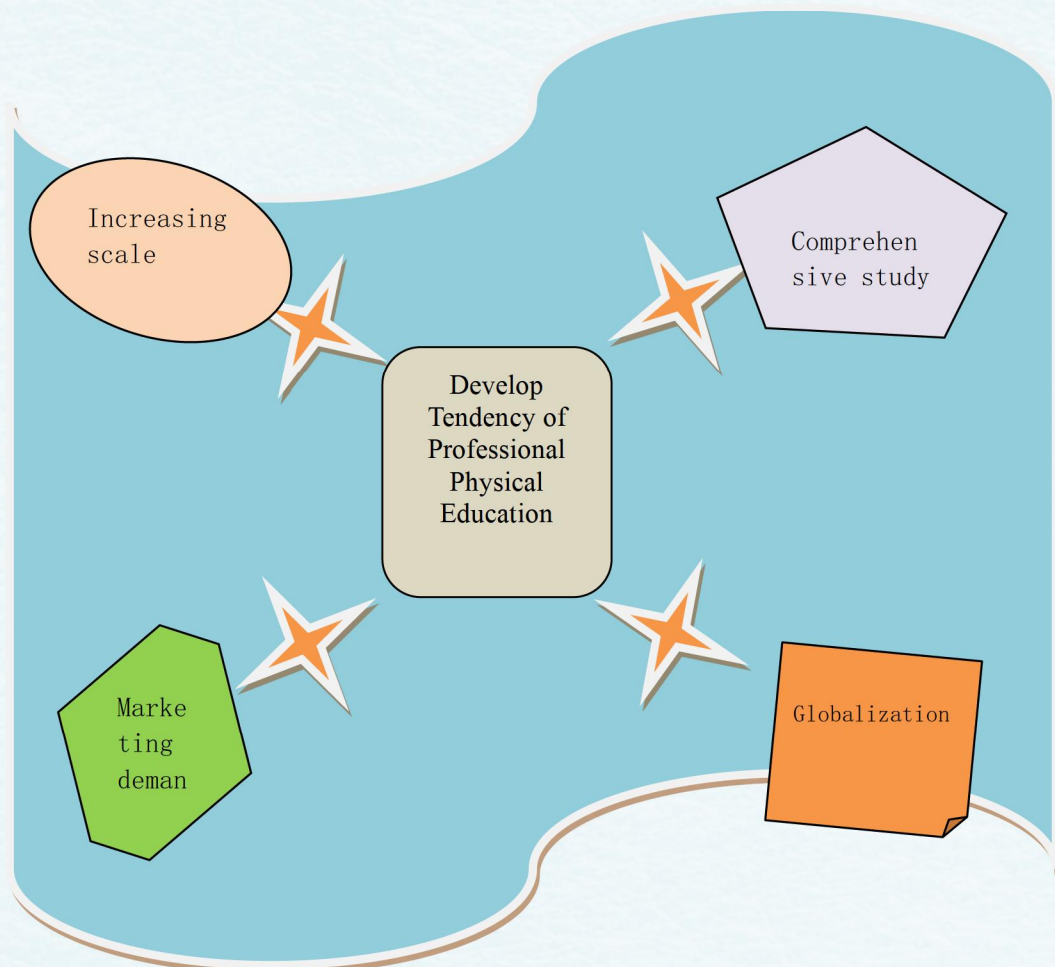
curriculum design, supervision and dissertation, students are encouraged to be gave more critical thinking, views and comprehensive knowledge covering various academic fields. It helps students to make creative ideas in cross-fields studies.

A conclusion is made that the graduate systems are designed according to the marketing demands. It makes the education system differs among different regions. In the market of Mainland China, the increasing enrollment in universities requires a large amount of professional researcher and teachers (Sun & Mei, 2010). So the graduate educational systems are designed to cater to the teacher market. So the mainland graduate system is basically focused on cultivate the foundation knowledge of students. They are trained to be more suitable for teaching position in colleges. Finally, after their graduation, they will get their own positions quickly according to the market.

The graduate system situations are different from Hong Kong and Taiwan. As they are both international cities, the academic atmosphere of them are influenced by globalization. It hints the international impact plays quiet an important part in the academic field (Sun & Mei, 2010). So their education system were designed to cultivate the students' own research ability of exploring the updated academic environment.

Therefore, the development tendency of professional Education is suggested to be summarized as the Figure 3 below: a. the scale of student's enrollment; b. the need of comprehensive studies. c. the demand of marketing and d. the impact of globalization.

**Figure 3. Develop Tendency of Professional Physical Education**



Overall speaking, by the comparison of the background, program objectives, duration, admission requirements, enrollment process, curriculum design, supervision system and dissertation qualifying system in the three regions, there are numbers of suggestions for universities in Mainland China. For instance, the trend of globalization, more international marketing demands, the cultivation goals and curriculum should be adjusted to follow the needs of professional academics.

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## Correspondence

Name: Wu Ting,  
The Education University of Hong Kong  
Email: [tingwu287@yahoo.com.hk](mailto:tingwu287@yahoo.com.hk)