

Research Article

Research on University Teaching Evaluation Criteria from the Perspective of Professional Title Promotion

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Abstract

Professional title promotion constitutes a critical component of faculty assessment in higher education institutions, directly influencing teachers' value judgments and behavioral orientations. Only by granting equal respect to teaching and research within the professional title promotion system can the prevailing phenomenon of "prioritizing research over teaching" in universities be fundamentally addressed. This study analyzes policy documents on professional title promotion from seven financial and economic universities in China and one international research-oriented university. Through comparative analysis, case studies and observational insights into evaluation practices at sample universities, this research clarifies the similarities and differences in teaching evaluation criteria between domestic and international professional title promotion systems, identifies existing issues in teaching evaluation mechanisms within Chinese universities, and provides novel insights for administrators to optimize teaching evaluation criteria and advance comprehensive university teachers evaluation reforms. We found that there are problems in most universities with their teaching evaluation mechanisms, such as relatively crude teaching evaluation criteria, insufficient comprehensiveness teaching evaluation content, and the lack of peer evaluation links. Therefore, in order to better align the professional title promotion results to teachers' teaching performance, universities should adopt a combined approach of quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluation, highlight the differences among disciplines in the evaluation criteria, introduce teaching innovation and teaching leadership criteria, establish a shared and recognized peer evaluation mechanism for teaching performance, and strengthen the linkage and cooperation among universities.

Keywords

University Teachers, Professional Title Promotion, Teaching Evaluation

1. Introduction

With the deepening of comprehensive reforms in higher education, professional title promotion in universities has undergone significant transformations. Universities nationwide have introduced measures to refine their evaluation systems and criteria. As a core element of the comprehensive university teachers' assessment framework, teaching evalua-

tion plays a pivotal role in accurately gauging pedagogical competence, motivating teaching innovation, and enhancing the quality of talent cultivation. However, the persistent bias toward research over teaching in professional title promotion has led young teachers to prioritize research capabilities over pedagogical development, thereby undermining overall

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Received: 29 May 2025; **Accepted:** 13 June 2025; **Published:** 8 July 2025



teaching quality and talent cultivation outcomes.

Under the guidance of policy and practice, designing scientifically grounded teaching evaluation systems that align with professional title promotion goals has become a central topic in higher education research. Such systems aim to ensure congruence between promotion outcomes and teaching performance, thereby motivating university teachers to improve educational quality.

1.1. The Development Process of Teaching Evaluation Criteria in Domestic Professional Title Promotion

The 2012 Guidelines on Comprehensively Improving Higher Education Quality issued by the Ministry of Education of China first emphasized consolidating undergraduate teaching as a core mission, making it a basic system for professors to teach undergraduates. Subsequent policies, including the 2016 Guidelines on Deepening the Reform of Teacher Evaluation Systems in Higher Education Institutions, issued by the Ministry of Education, and the 2017 Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Professional Title System, point out that teacher evaluation should prioritize ethics, emphasize teaching, establish research as a foundation, and focus on development as its core requirements. In terms of teaching evaluation criteria, these documents particularly proposed to highlight teaching achievements: (1) strict assessment of teaching workload will be implemented, with the establishment of comprehensive teaching workload evaluation criteria; (2) the quality evaluation system for teaching will be improved, with multi-dimensional assessment of teaching standards, teaching operations, classroom teaching effectiveness, teaching methods reform and research, teaching awards and so on; (3) a teaching incentive and constraint mechanism will be established, increasing the importance of teachers' teaching performance in professional title promotion; (4) the importance of classroom teaching discipline will be reinforced.

In October 2020, the Overall Plan for Deepening the Reform of Educational Evaluation in the New Era explicitly mandated reforms to teachers' evaluation systems, urging institutions to eliminate the tendency to prioritize research over teaching and to emphasize educational performance in evaluations. The document advocates equal recognition of teaching quality and research output in professional title promotion, performance assessment, and allowance distribution. In December 2020, the Guidelines on Deepening the Reform of Professional Title Promotion System in Higher Education Institutions jointly issued by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security and the Ministry of Education of China further emphasized the need to enhance evaluation criteria by prioritizing teaching competencies and achievements. The guidelines stipulate that fulfilling teaching responsibilities should serve as a baseline requirement for university teachers evaluation, with greater weight as-

signed to teaching performance and pedagogical research in professional title promotion.

It is obviously that since 2010, the evaluation requirements for teaching in university professional title promotion have gradually increased. Firstly, the importance of teaching evaluation has significantly risen, emphasizing comprehensive assessments of teachers' teaching abilities. Secondly, the importance of teaching achievements in the evaluation criteria is gradually increasing. Lastly, the teaching evaluation indicator system has been further refined, establishing the basic requirement that professors must teach undergraduate courses, and adding specific requirements regarding teaching standards, classroom discipline and effectiveness, as well as teaching reform research.

1.2. Related Research on Teaching Evaluation of University Teachers

Research on teaching evaluation in higher education serves as a vital pathway to enhance teaching quality. Current studies primarily focus on four aspects: evaluation subjects, evaluation types and methods, functions and purposes, and evaluation content and components [1]. Evaluation subjects are generally categorized into students, experts, peers, and teachers' self-evaluation. Scholars emphasize the importance of multi-subject participation in university teaching evaluation systems to leverage the strengths of each evaluator and ensure targeted and effective assessments [2-5]. Based on different evaluation purposes, teaching evaluations are classified into various types, with the most abundant literature discussing "quantitative vs. qualitative evaluation" and "performance-based vs. developmental evaluation." Common evaluation methods include regression analysis, one-way ANOVA, fuzzy comprehensive evaluation, and analytic hierarchy process. Recent research trends indicate a shift in the focus of university teaching evaluation from mere screening to fostering teacher's growth, for improving teaching competence and quality, and advancing the educational goals of higher education.

Analyzing the content and components of teaching evaluation in higher education is currently a research hotspot. For instance, Fei et al. aligned their work with policy documents like the Overall Plan for Deepening the Reform of Educational Evaluation in the New Era, employing expert surveys and analytic hierarchy processes to identify four key evaluation indicators: teaching quantity, teaching quality, teaching innovation, and teaching achievements [6]. Bai et al. proposing that the main metrics of teaching evaluation should include theoretical proficiency, content design, pedagogical methods, and teaching innovation [7]. Chen et al. start with the digital transformation of university teaching evaluations, arguing that unlike mainstream teaching evaluations, a comprehensive evaluation system for university teachers based on the evidence-based teaching concept should include four dimensions: teaching input, evidence collection, teaching

assessment, and teaching optimization, so as to evaluate teachers' teaching contributions and achievements more objectively [8]. Using policy instrument theory, Bao et al. categorized university teaching evaluation policies into five types: directive, incentive, capacity-building, systemic reform, and exhortative [9]. After analyzing professional title promotion documents from 36 universities, Shang et al. recommended establishing a teaching evaluation system based on three dimensions: teaching competence, theoretical exploration, and practical application ability [10]. By searching six electronic databases between January 2009 and August 2019, Harrison R et al. revealed that the use of teaching quality: student feedback data, self-assessment tools, peer review of teaching (formative and summative) and the use of teaching portfolios [11].

1.3. Summary of Related Research

Current studies extensively explore teaching evaluation dimensions for university teachers such as teaching quantity, teaching quality, effectiveness, and teaching achievements. It also focuses on teachers' professional ethics and their role in fostering students' innovative abilities, aiming to establish a comprehensive, scientific, and reasonable teaching evaluation system. However, few studies have approached this from the perspective of university professional title promotion, developing more targeted and directive teaching evaluation criteria to fully leverage the guiding role of title evaluation, help reverse the phenomenon of "prioritizing research over teaching" and promote the overall improvement of university teaching quality.

Given this context, this study uses the teaching evaluation criteria for professors in domestic financial and economic universities and UK research-oriented university as case

studies. It analyzes the similarities and differences in teaching standards set within different university professional title promotion systems domestically and internationally, as well as existing issues, aiming to provide new approaches for university administrators to improve their teaching evaluation mechanisms in professional title promotion and advance comprehensive teacher assessment reforms.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Materials Sources

Given the high consistency in course design, teaching management, and talent cultivation among domestic financial and economic universities, this study focuses on analyzing teaching evaluation policies from such institutions to ensure the accuracy of the analysis. The conclusions and recommendations derived will also benefit Central University of Finance and Economics and the broader academic community.

By reviewing official university websites, human resources portals, and internal document exchanges, this study collected professional title promotion documents currently implemented by seven domestic financial and economic universities including Renmin University of China (RUC), Central University of Finance and Economics (CUFE), Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (SUFE), University of International Business and Economics (UIBE), Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (DUFE), Southwestern University of Finance and Economics (SWUFE), and Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics (JUFE), as shown in [Table 1](#):

Table 1. Documents of Selected Universities.

University	Professional Title Promotion Documents
CUFE	The Evaluation Methods for Professional Titles in Central University of Finance and Economics
RUC	The Conditions for Teachers' Positions in Renmin University of China (Revised)
SUFE	The Regulations on Conditions for Teachers' Positions in Shanghai University of Finance and Economics (Revised in January 2022)
UIBE	The Evaluation Methods for Teacher-Series Professional Titles in University of International Business and Economics (Revised)
DUFE	The Management Methods for Professional Title Promotion in Dongbei University of Finance and Economics (Trial)
SWUFE	The Evaluation and Appointment Methods for Professional Titles in Southwestern University of Finance and Economics.
JUFE	The Evaluation Methods for Professional Titles in Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics (Revised in 2021).

2.2. Research Methods

This study primarily employs two methods for identifying teaching evaluation criteria in professional title promotion: comparative analysis and case studies.

2.2.1. Comparative Analysis

Researchers collect the teaching performance evaluation systems in the promotion of professors in several domestic and foreign university, and classify and refine the evaluation indicators. Through comparative analysis, we summarize the similarities and differences in the teaching performance evaluation systems in the title promotion systems of different domestic and foreign universities.

2.2.2. Case Studies

Researchers select the Academic Careers Framework from University College London as a typical case study for analyzing teaching evaluation criteria in foreign research universities. By examining the teaching activities required for a Professor (Grade 10 position), we summarized the university's teaching criteria in the university's title promotion and highlighted its flexible promotion mechanism.

3. Results

3.1. Teaching Evaluation Criteria in Professional Title Promotion Systems of Selected Domestic Universities

All seven universities adopt a categorized and graded evaluation system for professional title promotion. Positions are typically divided into three categories: teaching-research balanced, teaching-focused, and research-focused. For ranks, they are divided into four levels: junior, intermediate, associate senior, and senior. Given that the majority of university teachers assume dual teaching-research responsibilities and prioritize promotion to senior (professor) ranks, the impact of the criteria for professor promotion is the strongest. Therefore, this study focuses on comparing and analyzing the teaching evaluation criteria for teaching-research balanced professors across the seven universities, which are generally summarized into five categories: teaching quantity, teaching quality, teaching achievements, teaching guidance, and teaching accidents, as shown in [Table 2](#):

Table 2. Teaching Evaluation Criteria System for Professional Title Promotion of Selected Universities.

Teaching Evaluation Criteria	Specific Indicators
Teaching Quantity	Teaching workload, class hours, and courses teaching requirements
Teaching Quality	Teaching quality assessments
Teaching Achievements	Teaching achievement awards, educational awards, educational reform projects, curriculum development, textbook publication, pedagogical papers, etc.
Teaching Guidance	Student advising, participation in extracurricular activities
Teaching Accidents	Violations of teaching discipline

3.1.1. Teaching Quantity

Requirements for teaching quantity primarily involve minimum class hours or workload that teachers must meet

for promotion, as well as course types they are responsible for. The comparison of requirements among the seven universities is shown in [Table 3](#).

Table 3. Teaching Quantity Standards of Selected Universities.

University	Teaching Workload/Class Hours Requirements	Course Requirements
CUFE	Complete the prescribed teaching workload on average in recent three years.	Teach undergraduate courses every year.
RUC	Qualified in teaching work assessment in recent five years.	Teach two or more courses (including at least one foundational or specialized course).
SUFE	Complete 192 teaching workload per academic year (mini-	Teach at least one undergraduate course annually since

University	Teaching Workload/Class Hours Requirements	Course Requirements
	minimum 70% individual workload required); reach 64 class hours undergraduate teaching on average per academic year.	current position.
UIBE	Fully complete the prescribed educational and teaching tasks.	Teach at least one undergraduate course (≥ 2 credits) annually since current position.
DUFE	Complete the prescribed teaching workload on average in recent three years; The average annual teaching workload (including coefficients) ≥ 140 class hours.	independently and comprehensively teach 2 courses (one of which must be an undergraduate course) since current position.
SWUFE	Complete the prescribed teaching workload each year; teach undergraduate courses ≥ 30 class hours per academic year.	Teach at least one undergraduate and one graduate course; teach at least one new course since current position.
JUFE	The average annual teaching workload ≥ 192 class hours.	Teach at least one undergraduate course (≥ 64 class hours a year), achieve excellent teaching results with at least two evaluations of excellence during the current tenure; Independently and systematically teach one postgraduate course or effectively mentor young teachers.

As shown above, all seven universities have requirements for teachers' courses. except RUC, other universities also stipulate teaching workloads or minimum class hours for teachers. In terms of course types, it is required to teach undergraduate courses every year, implementing the basic system outlined in the national professional title documents that professors should teach undergraduate students. Specifically, SUFE and SWUFE have set specific undergraduate class hours for teachers, while JUFE includes teaching postgraduate courses in its teaching quantity standards.

3.1.2. Teaching Quality

In addition to teaching quantity, seven universities have imposed stricter requirements on the quality of teaching for professors applying for the teaching-research balanced positions. According to the documents, universities primarily evaluate teachers' teaching quality based on the results of teaching quality assessments, as detailed in Table 4.

Table 4. Teaching Quality Standards of Selected Universities.

University	Teaching Quality Assessment Requirements
CUFE	Average teaching quality assessment score ≥ 90 .
RUC	Teaching quality assessment results are "Excellent".
SUFE	The teaching quality must meet the evaluation requirements since current position; the cumulative average teaching-effect ranking score must be top 90% in the whole university or department.
UIBE	The required tenure for applying for professional title will be extended by two years if undergraduate or postgraduate course quality assessment scores $< 75/100$. The teaching performance will be graded based on 70% student evaluations + 30% expert reviews.
DUFE	Teaching quality assessment results \geq "Good" in recent three years.
SWUFE	Disqualification if the cumulative average teaching - effect ranking score falls in bottom 20% over five years.
JUFE	"Good" teaching effectiveness; "Qualified" teaching quality assessment results.

It is obvious that requirements for teaching quality are primarily divided into qualitative and quantitative indicators. Qualitative indicators vary, using descriptive terms such as "excellent", "good", or merely "qualified". In terms of quantitative indicators, some universities set requirements based

on scores, such as achieving 75 or 90 points and above. Others differentiate based on rankings, like the top 90% or top 80%. Furthermore, UIBE has introduced quantifiable metrics to grade teachers' teaching performance, combining student feedback (70%) and expert reviews (30%).

3.1.3. Teaching Achievements

Unlike teaching quantity and quality, there are significant differences among the seven universities in the requirements for teaching achievements in the professional title promotion, as shown in Table 5. Some universities, such as SUFE and SWUFE, do not require teaching-related achievements. While others, such as CUFU, UIBE, DUFE, and JUFU, set optional conditions for educational and teaching achievements, with evaluation criteria mainly covering teaching achievement awards, educational

awards, educational reform projects, curriculum development, textbook publication, pedagogical papers, etc.

Uniquely, RUC allows substitution between excellent teaching and research achievements in professional title promotion. For example, high-level academic monographs and high-level textbooks can be converted into each other, as well as research awards, educational awards, and teaching honors. This approach not only emphasizes the quality of the achievements but also considers their quantity, further highlighting the importance placed on teachers' practical educational contributions.

Table 5. Teaching Achievements Standards of Selected Universities.

University	Teaching Achievement Requirements
CUFE	<p>Meet one of the six conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain a teaching achievement award at the school level or above; 2. Obtain an educational award or a teaching honor title at the school level or above; 3. Obtain the approval of an educational reform project at the school level or above; 4. Obtain the approval of various teaching projects at the school level or above; 5. Reach the requirement of teaching quality assessment ranking.
RUC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independently write a high-level academic monograph, or be in charge of compiling a high-quality textbook; 2. Meet one of the following two conditions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Obtain a scientific research achievement award at provincial-level or above; or obtain an educational award of B-level or above recognized in RUC system and other educational awards at the same level; or obtain a talent award of Outstanding Scholar Youth A-level or above; or obtain the title of "Top Ten Head Teachers"; or guide the students to win the top three (or second-class award or above) in highly-influential national or international competitions; (2) Omitted, scientific research projects.
SUFE	None
UIBE	<p>Meet two of the three conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publish at least one paper on teaching research or teaching reform; 2. Lead at least one teaching project at the school level or above; 3. Obtain at least one teaching achievement award at the school level or above.
DUFE	<p>Meet one of the nine conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Actively use online-offline blended teaching models such as MOOCs or intelligent teaching tools to carry out teaching activities; 2. Lead and complete one educational reform project at provincial-level; 3. Publish one teaching research paper in a journal recognized by the school's academic committee at the provincial level or above; 4. As a major contributor (within the top three), win one provincial or higher-level teaching achievement award; 5. Win the second prize of the school's teaching excellence award once or more; 6. Win the second prize of the undergraduate teaching competition once or more; 7. Guide one provincial or higher-level college student innovation and entrepreneurship project; 8. Guide students to participate in various competitions or social practices and wins one provincial or higher-level award; 9. Achieve other provincial or higher-level teaching reform and construction results once or more.
SWUFE	None
JUFU	<p>Meet one of the two conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Obtain the approval of an educational reform or education science planning project or excellent course at provincial level; 2. Publish one pedagogical paper in a journal of D-level or above recognized in JUFU system.

3.1.4. Teaching Guidance

Teaching guidance is an extension and essential supplement to teaching, playing a crucial role in enhancing students' learning outcomes, stimulating their interest in learning, and fostering their ability for independent study. In professional title promotion, the requirements of teaching guidance are generally descriptive rather than mandatory, as shown in Table 5, which mostly includes descriptive statements such as "having experience in the full process of cultivating postgraduate students" and "given priority consideration". For example, DUFE offers preferential terms, reducing research

requirements for high-teaching-load teachers, while SWUFE adds the condition that non-fundamental discipline teachers must have independently guided at least one cohort of master's students. More often, teaching guidance is listed as an optional criterion in teaching evaluation, as seen in Table 6 where RUC includes "serving as the primary advisor guiding the students to win the top three (or second-class award or above) in highly-influential national or international competitions" alongside research awards, teaching awards, talent rewards, and honorary titles.

Table 6. Teaching Guidance Standards of Selected Universities.

University	Teaching Guidance Requirements
CUFE	None
RUC	Having experience in the full process of cultivating postgraduate students.
SUFE	1. Complete extracurricular activities, and teachers who excel in those will be given priority under equal conditions. 2. Supervised or co-supervised at least one qualified master's students over a five-year period, or have significantly mentored assistant lecturers or lecturers.
UIBE	Complete the average workload of guiding student theses and participating in social practice activities as required by the college.
DUFE	The requirements for papers and projects can be reduced if teachers' average annual teaching workload (including coefficients) ≥ 216 class hours.
SWUFE	For non-fundamental discipline teachers: must have independently guided at least one cohort of master's students since current position.
JUFE	Guide students in their graduation theses (designs), job hunting, innovation and entrepreneurship, social practice, club activities, and subject competitions.

3.1.5. Teaching Accidents

As a prohibitive clause in the professional title promotion, teaching accidents reflect that professional title promotion is not only the recognition of work performance, but also a comprehensive consideration of teachers' professional ethics and teaching attitudes. As shown in Table 7, all seven uni-

versities give a "one-vote veto" to teachers involved in teaching accidents, reflecting zero-tolerance for ethical violations. Among them, some universities classify teaching accidents into different levels, and establish corresponding prohibition periods based on those levels.

Table 7. Teaching Accident Standards of Selected Universities.

University	Teaching Accident Requirements
CUFE	1-year ban of promotion for serious teaching accidents; 2-year ban of promotion for considerable teaching accidents.
RUC	3-year teaching accident-free.
SUFE	1-year ban of promotion for ordinary teaching accidents; 3-year ban of promotion for considerable teaching accidents.
UIBE	1-year ban of promotion for teaching accidents; not qualified during the period of teaching accident sanctions.

University	Teaching Accident Requirements
DUFE	No teaching accidents or academic misconduct.
SWUFE	No teaching accidents above Level 3; 1 to 3-year deferral of promotion based on teaching accident severity (Level 1–3).
JUFE	2-year deferral of promotion for teachers directly responsible for the teaching accident.

In conclusion, the seven universities demonstrate consistency in foundational teaching evaluation criteria (teaching quantity, teaching quality, teaching accident avoidance) for teaching-research balanced position, while selectively incorporating advanced indicators such as teaching guidance and teaching achievements. This reflects both the universities’ commitment to their fundamental mission of fostering talent, and their intention to leverage the “guiding role” of professional title promotion. By setting evaluation standards, they aim to encourage teachers to focus on teaching performance and promote a comprehensive improvement in higher education.

3.2. Teaching Evaluation Criteria in in Professional Title Promotion Systems of Foreign Research Universities

The phenomenon of “prioritizing research over teaching” is also prevalent in foreign universities. How to scientifically establish teaching evaluation criteria in professional title promotion has become a significant research topic in international academia. For instance, University College London (UCL) introduced its Academic Careers Framework in 2017, which highlights the importance of teaching in professional title promotion through flexible teaching evaluation criteria and promotion mechanisms [12, 13].

3.2.1. Teaching Evaluation Criteria of UCL

The Academic Careers Framework outlines teaching activities required for different academic grades, categorized into core teaching activities and specialized teaching activities.

Taking the Professor (Grade 10 position) as an example, core teaching activities include: leading innovative changes to the curriculum, championing of inclusive teaching practices as a senior member of staff and mentoring/encouraging colleagues to engage in, continuously participating in the development of new teaching methods, managing professional development short courses, leading collaborative education projects, either nationally or with international partners, etc. And Specialized teaching activities include: sustained leadership of cross-institutional education initiatives, acting as an institutional or national champion for education reform or innovation, repeated and sustained leading roles in nationally and internationally important activity, nationally respected provider of leading educational advice to government bodies and other large organizations of significant impact, participation in national committees relating to developments in the discipline, participation in curriculum review at other institutions, etc.

Based on these activities, UCL’s teaching evaluation criteria for professional title promotion can be summarized into four aspects: teaching practice, curriculum development, teaching achievements, and teaching leadership, as detailed in Table 8.

Table 8. Teaching Evaluation Criteria at UCL.

Teaching Evaluation Criteria	Specific Indicators
Teaching Practice	Course delivery, inclusive teaching practices, etc.
Curriculum Development	Innovative curriculum reforms, development of new teaching methods, etc.
Teaching Achievements	Research outputs based on teaching activities
Teaching Leadership	Participation in teaching administration, provision of teaching consultancy, roles in teaching-related institutions, etc.

3.2.2. Promotion Mechanisms

To apply for a Professor (Grade 10 position), teachers must not only fulfill the teaching activities of their current rank (Grade 9) but also complete most core and some specialized

teaching activities required for Grade 10. During the promotion process, applicants must prepare materials aligned with these activities. UCL departments establish promotion panels to review applications and determine recommendations for promotion.

Applicants are required to submit recommendation letters.

Specifically, for a Professor (Grade 10 position): 1 internal recommender, 2 external recommenders, and 2 external department heads are required. Notably, the department head of the applicant's own department familiar with the applicant's teaching contributions must serve as one of the recommenders.

4. Discussion

4.1. Comparison of Teaching Evaluation Criteria Between Domestic and Foreign Universities

Compared to research work, teaching activities are more difficult to quantify, which partially explains why teaching is often undervalued in professional title promotions. In domestic universities, teaching evaluation criteria for professional title promotion tend to rely heavily on quantifiable indicators such as teaching quantity, teaching quality, and teaching accident avoidance. However, "soft" indicators like teaching achievements and teaching guidance receive insufficient attention. This narrow focus may fail to fully reflect a teacher's pedagogical achievements and quality, potentially disadvantaging teachers who excel in teaching but lack quantifiable metrics during their promotion process.

In contrast, foreign universities have introduced the criterion of teaching leadership, focusing on evaluating teachers' roles in teaching activities at departmental, institutional, national, and international levels. This encourages teachers to value peer collaboration and collectively improve teaching projects and teams.

4.2. Current Issues in Domestic Teaching Evaluation Criteria

4.2.1. Relatively Crude Teaching Evaluation Criteria

In recent years, the importance of teaching in professional title promotion system has significantly increased, reflected in universities' growing emphasis on teaching quality, teaching achievements, and educators' performance [14]. However, the tendency to prioritize research over teaching still somewhat influences university promotion mechanisms. Compared to research achievements, teaching-related evaluation criteria, such as teaching achievements and guidance, often seem vague and subjective, making it difficult to compete with "hard" indicators like research outputs. Meanwhile, the criteria for teaching quantity, teaching quality, and teaching accident avoidance do not show significant differences across disciplines, leading to homogenized evaluation criteria.

Consequently, under the pressure of promotion, many teachers will still prioritize research projects and publications over improving teaching quality and innovating pedagogical practices, ultimately hindering students' holistic development and the overall enhancement of higher education quality.

4.2.2. Insufficient Comprehensiveness of Teaching Evaluation Content

Universities' professional title promotion systems primarily follow two paradigms: managerialism and developmentalism [15]. A comparison of domestic and international teaching evaluation criteria reveals that Chinese universities currently adhere to a managerialist model, emphasizing administrative convenience and operational feasibility. This approach overemphasizes easily quantifiable indicators like task completion rates and teaching quality assessments while neglecting deeper evaluation of educational impact. For example, indicators such as student guidance, practical teaching, textbook/case study development, and participation in teaching-research activities are often treated as optional rather than core indicator, which results in homogenized and superficial evaluation that fails to address teachers' professional development needs [16, 17].

In contrast, international universities lean toward developmental evaluation models in professional title promotion. Criteria like "curriculum development" and "teaching leadership" enrich evaluation indicators, directly aligning teaching responsibilities with evaluation criteria [18]. This approach supports career planning for teachers, clarifies improvement directions, and fosters synergy between personal growth and teaching quality.

4.2.3. Lack of Peer Evaluation in Teaching Evaluation

Currently, external peer evaluations in Chinese professional title promotion focuses overwhelmingly on research output and academic influence, with few institutions conducting peer reviews of teaching performance. Even among universities experimenting with external teaching evaluations, the lack of effective mechanisms and universally recognized standards has cast doubt on the fairness and accuracy of results. Consequently, contributions to teaching are often marginalized or overlooked in promotion processes, driving some teachers to overly pursue research outputs rather than teaching work for career promotion and exacerbating the trend of "prioritizing research over teaching" imbalance in universities.

4.3. Recommendations for Optimizing Teaching Evaluation in Professional Title Promotion

4.3.1. Clarify and Refine Teaching Evaluation Standards

A combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods for teaching achievements and teaching guidance should be adopted. For example, teaching achievements can be subdivided into teaching research and teaching innovation. Among them, teaching research achievements include specific indicators such as the publication of textbooks and

teaching research papers. Quantify and score the refined indicators, and use the “weighted average” method for statistics to avoid general evaluation of a review condition.

A highlight of differences among disciplines in the teaching evaluation criteria would be beneficial. For example, considering the differences in teaching content, teaching methods, and the application of teaching results among different disciplines, administrators should focus on different areas in evaluation: for humanities disciplines, enhance the examination of teachers’ depth of teaching thoughts and teaching research abilities; for science and engineering disciplines, focus on experimental design and innovation capabilities, as well as the requirements for the transformation and application of teaching research achievements; for social science disciplines, focus on the help that teachers’ teaching brings to the improvement of students’ practical abilities.

4.3.2. Enrich Teaching Evaluation Content

The introduction of teaching innovation criteria is suggested, focusing separately on examining teachers’ curriculum reforms, pedagogical method innovations, and teaching resource developments. Specific indicators should include but are not limited to teaching reform awards, leadership in educational reform projects, and self-developed teaching resources, encouraging teachers to continuously explore and practice new teaching concepts and methods to improve teaching quality.

The introduction of teaching leadership criteria is suggested, increasing the examination of teachers’ ability to lead teaching teams and influence among peers in their own discipline fields. Specific indicators shall include but are not limited to leadership in teaching teams, contributions to educational governance, advisory roles for governmental/large organizations, and participation in national disciplinary committees.

4.3.3. Strengthen Peer Evaluation of Teaching Performance

It is recommended that a peer evaluation mechanism for teaching performance be implemented, whereby external or international experts conduct hierarchical evaluations on teachers’ teaching content, teaching methods, teaching effects, etc. These evaluations should be systematically integrated with existing research performance assessments to inform comprehensive promotion and tenure decisions.

It is proposed that the inter-university linkage and collaboration be promoted, developing a sharing evaluation criteria and a recognized teaching evaluation system for professional title promotion. This would enhance the scientific, professional and effective nature of teaching peer evaluation while helping teachers to discover and improve the deficiencies in teaching and clarify the direction for improving teaching work.

5. Conclusions

This study examines the professional title promotion systems of seven major financial and economic universities in China and one foreign research-oriented university. By observing the teaching evaluation practices at these sample universities, it clarifies the similarities and differences in teaching evaluation criteria between domestic and international professional title promotion systems, identifies existing issues in teaching evaluation mechanisms within Chinese universities, and provides novel insights for university administrators to solve the current phenomenon of “prioritizing research over teaching”, optimizing the teaching evaluation mechanism in professional title promotion.

By conducting a comparative analysis of seven major domestic financial and economic universities, the study found that these universities demonstrate consistency in foundational teaching evaluation criteria (teaching quantity, teaching quality, teaching accident avoidance) for teaching-research balanced position, while selectively incorporating advanced indicators such as teaching guidance and teaching achievements.

By conducting a case study of University College London and comparing it with domestic financial and economic universities, the results showed that domestic universities rely more on quantifiable indicators such as teaching quantity, teaching quality, and teaching accident avoidance for their evaluations, while placing insufficient emphasis on “soft” indicators like teaching achievements and teaching guidance. In contrast, foreign universities emphasize criteria like teaching leadership, assessing faculty contributions to teaching at departmental, institutional, national, and international levels, encouraging collaboration among peers to improve teaching programs and teams.

In conclusion, there are problems in most domestic universities with their teaching evaluation criteria, such as relatively crude teaching evaluation criteria, insufficient comprehensiveness teaching evaluation content, and the lack of peer evaluation links.

Based on the findings, it is advisable that universities adopt a combination of quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluation, highlight the differences among disciplines in the evaluation criteria, introduce teaching innovation and teaching leadership criteria, establish a shared and recognized peer evaluation mechanism for teaching performance, and strengthen the linkage and cooperation among universities, so as to better align the professional title promotion results to teaching performance.

The advent of the digital age has had a significant impact on the development of education and teachers. Emerging tools and resources such as online teaching platforms, virtual laboratories, artificial - intelligence teaching assistants and big - data - analysis teaching strategies have been widely integrated into the teaching process. Future research can focus on the construction of teaching evaluation criteria in the digital age.

For example, researchers can explore the construction of the evaluation index system for university teachers' digital literacy, and the application of these evaluation results in the professional title promotion mechanism in universities, so as to ensure the teaching evaluation criteria remain up-to-date and accurately reflect teachers' real teaching abilities in the digital age.

Abbreviations

RUC	Renmin University of China
CUFE	Central University of Finance and Economics
SUFE	Shanghai University of Finance and Economics
UIBE	University of International Business and Economics
DUFE	Dongbei University of Finance and Economics
SWUFE	Southwestern University of Finance and Economics
JUFE	Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics
UCL	University College London

Author Contributions

Feiyu Li: Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing

Hongxin Yu: Conceptualization, Resources, Conceptualization, Project administration

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. The sponsors had no role in the design, execution, interpretation, or writing of the study.

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