Region - Educational Research and Reviews, 2026, Volume 8, Issue 7
DOI: 10.32629/rerr.v8i7.5588
ISSN Online: 2661-4634
ISSN Print: 2661-4626

An analysis of paths to improve teachers' professional ethics in private universities

Jinrong LIU

Baoshan University, Baoshan 678000, China

Abstract: Teachers' professional ethics form the core of faculty development in higher education. Embedded throughout the entire process of teaching, talent cultivation, academic research and teacher-student communication, such ethics determine educational quality and the connotative development of universities, and constitute an indispensable component of the modern higher education governance system. As an integral part of China's higher education system, private universities cultivate talents under market-driven school operation mechanisms, and differ markedly from public universities in faculty composition, management models and school positioning. Accordingly, the cultivation of teachers' professional ethics in private universities takes place under distinctive realistic environments and career development conditions. Currently, private universities are characterized by diversified teaching teams, flexible employment systems, high occupational mobility and an application-oriented educational philosophy. Nevertheless, the supporting systems for cultivating teachers' professional ethics lack sufficient adaptability to these features, resulting in varying degrees of deficiencies in teachers' ideological awareness, professional conduct and educational practice. This paper sorts out the developmental background and unique characteristics of teachers' ethics construction in private universities, analyzes prominent practical dilemmas restricting the cultivation of teachers' professional ethics, and constructs a systematic optimization framework from four dimensions: hierarchical cognitive cultivation, institutional governance, situational immersive edification and career empowerment. It aims to provide theoretical references for the connotative development of faculty teams and long-term ethical governance in private universities.

Keywords: private universities; teachers' professional ethics; improvement paths

1 Introduction

The faculty team constitutes the core competitiveness of private universities, and teachers' professional ethics exert a direct influence on classroom teaching quality, students' ideological development and the overall campus educational ecology. Unlike public universities funded by fiscal funding, private universities rely on social capital and boast more flexible personnel management mechanisms. Their teaching faculty comprises permanent full-time teachers, industry adjunct lecturers and part-time industry instructors, a diversified group marked by frequent staff turnover and market-oriented career growth paths. For a long time, most private universities have prioritized tangible school-running indicators such as major construction, student enrollment, graduate employment and practical training facilities. The cultivation of teachers' professional ethics, by contrast, has mostly depended on routine administrative training, without specialized training systems tailored to the characteristics of private education. Against this backdrop, reconstructing targeted systems for teachers' professional ethics cultivation and refining standardized training and governance mechanisms compatible with

Copyright © 2026 by author(s) and Frontier Scientific Research Publishing Inc.
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

the operation rules and educational scenarios of private universities has become a core driving force for their connotative development.

2 Basic overview of teachers' ethics construction in private universities

2.1 Core connotation of university teachers' professional ethics

Centered on the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, the professional ethics of university teachers cover five core dimensions: professional integrity, educational conduct, academic norms, teacher-student ethics and social morality, which run through every teaching stage and all educational scenarios.

• Professional integrity: It focuses on standardized teaching duties, including abiding by teaching regulations, exercising appropriate control over classroom content and fully fulfilling prescribed teaching tasks.

• Educational conduct: It refers to teachers' verbal and behavioral demonstrations in interactions with students, which exert implicit educational influence through daily communication, classroom guidance and value shaping.

• Academic norms: It establishes clear boundaries for academic integrity, standardized research outputs and research ethics in scientific research, teaching research and academic exchanges.

• Teacher-student ethics: It defines conduct bottom lines and appropriate communication boundaries between teachers and students, prohibiting utilitarian exchanges and unfair differential treatment of students.

2.2 Unique characteristics of teachers' ethics construction in private universities

The special institutional attributes of private universities endow their teachers' ethics cultivation with distinctive features that separate them from public higher education institutions.

• Diversified faculty composition: The teaching faculty includes permanent full-time teachers, external enterprise lecturers and short-term part-time researchers, who hold vastly different professional backgrounds, institutional belonging and teaching experience. One-size-fits-all ethical training programs cannot meet the diverse demands of different teacher groups.

• Application-oriented school-running philosophy: Private universities prioritize the cultivation of applied talents, with teaching focused on practical vocational skills and professional literacy. Correspondingly, training on teachers' professional ethics must integrate industrial ethics and professional craftsmanship, which distinguishes it from the ethical cultivation models of research-oriented universities.

• Specialized personnel management mechanisms: Staff performance assessments in private universities are closely linked to student enrollment, employment outcomes and teaching performance, leading to higher faculty mobility. Unlike public universities with permanent staffing systems that provide strong institutional binding force, ethical governance in private universities relies more on contractual restraints and the cultivation of teachers' sense of institutional belonging.

2.3 Realistic context of teachers' ethics construction in private universities

Against the backdrop of classified development of higher education in the new era, educational authorities have issued special governance regulations for private education, integrating teachers' professional ethics into core evaluation indicators for private universities' qualification reviews, quality assessments and annual inspections. The construction of teachers' ethics has evolved from an internal faculty management matter into a top priority for compliance governance. First, regarding student cohort characteristics: Students enrolled in private universities tend to be open-minded and career-oriented, and they hold higher standards for teachers' classroom performance, professional literacy and industrial practical insights. Teachers' moral conduct and role modeling directly shape students' vocational values. Second, deep industry-university integration: Private universities maintain close ties with regional industrial development, and their teachers

frequently participate in corporate training, project cooperation and industrial services. Numerous off-campus professional scenarios bring new ethical boundary challenges to teachers' ethics governance. Third, public opinion supervision environment: New media platforms accelerate the dissemination of university teachers' words and deeds, placing private universities under stricter public scrutiny. Any violation of teachers' ethics can quickly trigger widespread online public discussion, compelling private universities to establish refined, regular ethical governance systems.

3 Paths to improve teachers' professional ethics in private universities

3.1 Hierarchical cognitive cultivation of teachers' professional ethics

In response to the diversified composition of faculty in private universities, a tiered and categorized cognitive training system should be established to replace the previous one-size-fits-all training mode and promote the internalization of professional ethics among different teacher groups [1].

- For young full-time teachers: Training focuses on consolidating their original aspiration for education, standardizing classroom ethics and regulating proper teacher-student relations. It elaborates the internal logical connection between ethical norms and application-oriented education, so as to rectify the cognitive biases brought by market-centric career concepts.
- For middle-aged backbone teachers: Advanced training covers academic integrity, standardized research procedures and educational leadership. Regular internal teaching research salons and ethics seminars enable backbone teachers to set positive moral examples for other faculty members.
- For external and part-time industrial instructors: Training emphasizes university teaching standards, standardized classroom behavior and scientific student guidance principles. It fills the gap in ethical awareness for industry practitioners new to higher education and reduces the negative interference of corporate workplace mindsets on educational practice.

Rather than relying solely on theoretical lectures, the training system adopts lightweight learning activities tailored to teachers' fragmented spare time, such as regular micro-training sessions, typical case studies and peer mutual evaluation, encouraging teachers to voluntarily internalize relevant ethical norms.

3.2 Improvement of full-lifecycle internal governance systems for teachers' ethics

In line with the corporate-style governance structure of private universities, a customized ethical governance system matching market-driven employment mechanisms should be reconstructed, covering the full lifecycle of faculty management: recruitment screening, on-the-job supervision, performance evaluation and dismissal procedures [2].

- Recruitment screening: Verification of ethical conduct is set as a mandatory pre-employment threshold. Institutions review applicants' employment records, academic files and historical teaching evaluations to reject candidates with a record of ethical violations.
- On-the-job supervision: Detailed checklists of ethical conduct customized for private university teaching scenarios clarify clear behavioral boundaries for classroom lectures, online speech, teacher-student communication and off-campus social services. These checklists distinguish general standards applicable to public universities from scenario-specific rules for private institutions, providing concrete operable guidance for faculty [3].

4 Conclusion

In summary, due to their unique school-running systems, faculty structures and educational orientations, private universities display distinctive characteristics in the connotation, implementation conditions and group dynamics of teachers' ethics construction compared with public universities. Multiple obstacles, including uneven ethical awareness among diversified faculty groups, poorly adapted governance systems, insufficient immersive cultivation scenarios and

widespread occupational anxiety, hinder the overall improvement of teachers' professional ethics. The tiered cognitive cultivation system, full-cycle internal governance framework, campus-wide immersive ethical edification environment and all-round career development support can jointly form a complete ethics optimization system compatible with the operation rules of private universities. This transformation shifts the construction of teachers' professional ethics from passive external institutional restrictions to active internal self-identity, and from uniform universal training to targeted precise cultivation.

Moving forward, private universities can refine detailed implementation rules and diversified training carriers for ethical development based on their own major layouts, faculty structures and regional industrial characteristics. By balancing market-driven school operation with the normative requirements of educational ethics, they can construct a sustainable teachers' ethics cultivation model that integrates industrial characteristics with educational missions, boost the high-quality development of faculty teams, and consolidate the core foundation for cultivating applied talents in private higher education.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

[1] Fu D Q, Zhao Z L, Wang Z Q. Problems and improvement paths of university teachers' professional ethics construction[J]. Education Teaching Forum, 2024(39): 37-40.

[2] Zhang D L. Research on paths to improve university teachers' professional ethics[J]. Modern Business Trade Industry, 2024, 45(14): 214-216.

[3] Mont W Y, Jin Z P. Improvement mechanism and realization path of university teachers' professional ethics literacy[J]. Public Relations World, 2023(7): 122-123.