

# China's Statistical Distance Education: Organization

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## 1. Introduction

The Statistical Education Center (SEC) is a department in charge of the statistical education and training activities in the NBS. The Training Center of Statisticians was set up in the NBS on 19 April 1986, and it was later on changed its name as the Statistical Education Center on 24 January 1996. The SEC is responsible for the administration of statistical education and training and takes charge of the organization and administration of national education and training programs for statistics. China's statistical distance education is one of the programs, which are organized by the SEC but implemented by the Training College of the NBS. The College has implemented the programs with the following features: Making close cooperation with statistical agencies; Laying emphasis on the quality and quantity of the training; Taking the distance education as the main training form; Developing standardized education and training courses and conducting the programs in the form of hierarchic management.

This paper is to introduce the organization of China's statistical distance education.

## 2. Organization and Features of China's Statistical Distance Education

The official statistical system has now a hierarchic structure for the organization and management of the education and training programs: The College at the national level, the branch colleges at the provincial level, the sub-branch colleges at the prefecture level and the classes at the county level. The agencies of all the levels have full-time and/or part-time employees available for the organization and management to conduct the programs. The agencies are responsible to the statistical offices in terms of administration while responsible to the agencies at a higher level in terms of conducting the programs. In addition, the agencies have developed sound partnership with over 40 universities or colleges and invited approximately one thousand specialists and professors to deliver lectures for the programs.

The College has built an efficient distribution system of textbooks, production system of training media and playing system, all which make it possible to implement the programs with the traditional correspondence material and modern audio-video facilities. Hundreds of thousands of participants have thus received the training set by the College. It is impossible, otherwise, for the formal universities to train such a large number of students in a short period of time.

The College also organizes statisticians to participate in the national standard examinations and/or formal university examinations. If they pass those examinations, the participants will be issued with diploma or certificates adopted by the government. The authorities of the government adhere to the principle of the separation of the training from the examination. As a result, the College does not have the rights to give the final examinations and issue diploma and certificates to the participants and thus what the College does is to take activities to support the education and training programs. The College assists the participants in studying the knowledge and passing their

examinations by means of correspondence guidance and class guidance. The quality of the education and training programs can be ensured on a fair basis.

The College can design its training programs according to the requirements. Proposals can be made to the National Examination Committee of Higher Education Self-Learning on the training orientations, curricula, courses, textbooks and manuals and examination plans. This flexibility helps the College and its partners make full use of the existing resources and train the participants needed by statistical agencies. Another flexibility is that the College may develop different courses at different levels for different categories of participants to apply for and study.

The College encourages the participants to take the programs out of their work hours. Such arrangements help improve the knowledge of the employed statisticians while they still have their jobs. This kind of design is very much appreciated and supported by the managers of the employing organizations and thus makes it possible for the working statisticians to participate in the training programs. Another advantage of such a design is that studies during their spare time facilitate the immediate application of what they have learnt in their practical work and thus help the transfer of their knowledge to their skills.

The distance education of the College will also help concentrate its investment in the facilities instead of buildings usually needed for the formal universities.

### **3. Future Orientation of China's Statistical Distance Education**

The development of China's statistical distance education was based on the development of the College. The College has to enhance its internal development in two fields: human resources and financial resources. In terms of human resources, the College will speed up its restructuring of internal institutions, strengthen its branch colleges, include qualified teachers and administrative staff, and readjust the relationship with branch colleges. In terms of financial resources, the College will make more financial inputs and improve its infrastructure. Another very important aspect for the College is to upgrade cooperation with other agencies and organizations in a competitive environment and to maintain its dynamic development.

The development orientation of China's distance education is to gradually build China's Statistical Education and Training Network that will make use of the resources from China Statistical Information Network and Internet to conduct distance education. With the technological progress, various networks will carry more and more resources, become more and more accessible, and thus become the third-generation media of distance education after correspondence and television. China Statistical Information Network, linked with Internet, is gradually expanding itself to the entire statistical system and can be used to conduct distance education. We plan to apply for the inclusion of China's Statistical Education and Training Network in the development plan of China's Statistical Information Network.

### **4. Conclusion**

Now China's distance education is faced with some main challenges in its development: the competition is growing among the education institutions in both the public and private sectors; the resources accessible and cooperation opportunities available for the College are reducing; the modern technology and management have to be followed etc. It is believed that there will be a great need of the statistical education and training in China and China's statistical distance education will continue to play an important role in upgrading the qualifications of statisticians.

### **REFERENCES**

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### **RÉSUMÉ**

*Ce papier a discuté les modes d'organisation et les caractéristiques de la formation statistique à distance en Chine. En découvrant les défis que face le développement de la formation statistique à distance en Chine, le papier a présenté un plan pour le développement dans le futur. L'auteur est convaincu que la formation statistique à distance continuera à jouer un rôle important dans l'amélioration du niveau de l'enseignement statistique et l'avancement du travail statistique en Chine.*