

**PRACTICE-ORIENTED LEGAL EDUCATION SYSTEM: INNOVATION –  
EXPLORATION AT BIT LAW SCHOOL BASED ON “TWO-WING SYNERGY  
AND THREE-DIMENSIONAL COLLABORATION”**

**SISTEMA DE EDUCACIÓN JURÍDICA ORIENTADO A LA PRÁCTICA:  
INNOVACIÓN – EXPLORACIÓN EN LA FACULTAD DE DERECHO BIT  
BASADA EN “SINERGIA DE DOS ALAS Y COLABORACIÓN  
TRIDIMENSIONAL”**

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## Abstract

Legal education should be practice-oriented. However, practical training remains a weak area globally. Traditional methods like moot courts, legal clinics, and internships require further improvement. In response to new circumstances, several targeted measures should be implemented. First, ideological and political education should be integrated into practical legal courses to help students understand the achievements of China’s rule-of-law development and enhance their sense of social responsibility. Second, the digitalization of practical training should be advanced through the use of virtual simulation technologies, the establishment of smart legal laboratories, and internships in legal technology firms. Third, internationalization should be promoted by building collaborative innovation platforms for

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cultivating international legal talent. Fourth, practical evaluation in professional degree programs should be improved by establishing clear standards for Juris Master thesis writing, including formats such as research reports and case analyses.

**Keywords:** practice-oriented, legal education, curriculum-based political education, digitalization; internationalization.

## Resumen

La educación jurídica debe estar orientada a la práctica. Sin embargo, la formación práctica sigue siendo un área débil a nivel mundial. Los métodos tradicionales, como los tribunales simulados, las clínicas jurídicas y las prácticas profesionales, requieren mejoras. En respuesta a las nuevas circunstancias, se deben implementar varias medidas específicas. En primer lugar, se debe integrar la educación ideológica y política en los cursos prácticos de derecho para ayudar a los estudiantes a comprender los logros del desarrollo del Estado de derecho en China y fortalecer su sentido de responsabilidad social. En segundo lugar, se debe impulsar la digitalización de la formación práctica mediante el uso de tecnologías de simulación virtual, el establecimiento de laboratorios jurídicos inteligentes y prácticas profesionales en firmas de tecnología jurídica. En tercer lugar, se debe promover la internacionalización mediante la creación de plataformas de innovación colaborativa para cultivar el talento jurídico internacional. En cuarto lugar, se debe mejorar la evaluación práctica en los programas de grado profesional mediante el establecimiento de estándares claros para la redacción de tesis de maestría en derecho, incluyendo formatos como informes de investigación y análisis de casos.

**Palabras clave:** educación jurídica orientada a la práctica, educación política basada en el currículo, digitalización, internacionalización.

## Introduction

At its Third Plenary Session, the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China adopted the “Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reforms and Promoting Chinese-Style Modernization”, which explicitly calls for “improving the practice-oriented education and training mechanisms in law schools”. This marks an important step toward fully implementing the guiding principles on legal education laid out by President Xi Jinping during his 2017 visit to the China University of Political Science and Law. At that time, President Xi stated, “Law is a highly practice-oriented discipline. Legal education must strike a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical training. We must dismantle institutional barriers between universities and society, introduce high-quality practical teaching resources from government and professional institutions into universities, and promote exchanges among legal educators, researchers, and practitioners engaged in the rule of law”.

On November 27, 2023, during the 10th collective study session of the 20th Central Political Bureau, President Xi further emphasized: “We must adhere to the principle of cultivating virtue and fostering talent, integrate moral and legal education, strengthen discipline construction, enhance legal education, establish practice-oriented training mechanisms, and cultivate a group of foreign-related legal

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professionals who are politically steadfast, professionally competent, familiar with international rules, and proficient in foreign-related legal practice.”

Therefore, against the strategic backdrop of intensifying global technological competition and the restructuring of governance rules, the School of Law at Beijing Institute of Technology (BIT) has developed a distinctively practice-oriented training model aimed at cultivating foreign-related legal talent for international scientific and technological organizations, which aligns with the demands of the times. The current era is one of rapid technological advancement and unprecedented global transformation.

The nation urgently requires composite legal professionals who are well-versed in both ethics and law to meet the needs of emerging productive forces such as artificial intelligence, as well as international legal professionals capable of addressing the challenges posed by the unprecedented global transformation. China’s legal education has undergone substantial reforms in the area of practical teaching in the new era, but in light of the new demands of the state under the new era and new circumstances, further innovation in practice-based legal education warrants close attention and in-depth study.

This article aims to substantiate and explore innovations in the practice-oriented legal education system. It includes the experience of the Beijing Institute of Technology's Law School based on “two-wing synergy and three-dimensional collaboration”.

## **The Essence of Legal Education: A Global Consensus on Practice-Oriented Education and China’s Exploration**

### **(i) The Shift Toward Practice in Legal Education Abroad**

In the global framework for cultivating legal talent, a practice-oriented approach has always been a defining feature of legal education. In recent years, discussions on legal education in both the civil law system and the common law system have increasingly emphasized this orientation.

Traditional civil law powerhouses such as Germany and France are shifting away from the academic-oriented education model that has traditionally emphasized theoretical instruction. Historically, law schools in European countries have adopted an academic-oriented teaching approach, placing greater emphasis on knowledge transmission. In civil law countries like France and Germany, the purpose of legal education is to equip students with foundational knowledge in private, public, and social law, enabling them to understand any new legal field or legislation within a reasonable time frame during their future legal careers. Similarly, legal education in British universities has traditionally been scholarly and theoretical in nature, with little emphasis on practical education.<sup>1</sup>

However, with the evolution of the times and the mutual influence of legal education systems across nations, the legal education systems of these countries have also undergone changes. In 1967, the British “O’Meara Report” pointed out that in British legal education, it is necessary to abandon the mindset that opposes “academic knowledge” and “professional practice” or “theory” and “practice”, and to strengthen the connection and collaboration between the legal profession and university law schools to jointly improve the quality of legal education.<sup>2</sup>

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Currently, the characteristics of German legal education include a practice-oriented approach, emphasizing the cultivation of legal professionals with a strong integration of theory and practice.<sup>3</sup> Contemporary German legal education is practice-oriented legal dogmatic. The practice-oriented nature of German legal education also enables university professors, judges, and other practitioners to form a professional community capable of collaborating on the development and writing of commentaries.<sup>4</sup> “Case-based teaching methods” have been introduced into UK in recent years to meet the “needs of legal reasoning”, and to train students in professional skills and techniques.<sup>1</sup>

Before recent reforms in legal education, both Japan and South Korea faced challenges such as a disconnect between academic legal education and legal professional education, as well as a lack of practical courses aimed at cultivating legal skills and promoting legal ethics.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, Japan in 2004 and South Korea in 2008 introduced reforms inspired by the American law school education model, shifting their legal education systems toward a more practice-oriented and professionally aligned approach.

Legal education in the United States and Canada can be categorized together. Since the late 19th century, U.S. legal education has primarily adopted the Socratic case-based teaching method advocated by Harvard Law School Dean Langdell. Langdell and his colleagues have consistently maintained that law is a science, and promoted the notion that the library is the appropriate workshop for professors and students; just as the university laboratory serves chemists and physicists, the natural history museum serves for zoologists, and the botanical garden serves botanists.<sup>6</sup> Langdell’s teaching method is considered a theory-oriented approach, and in recent years, it has faced increasing criticism: Langdell’s educational concept treats its subject matter as a set of pre-determined rules or methods that exist “outside” and in a passive domain separate from and independent of students. This notion is completely inconsistent with the now widely accepted fact that what is taught in law schools is a human creation, a socially constructed entity... A basic understanding of legal practice and even legal theory can only be gained through the actual execution of legal tasks or the observation of legal behavior.<sup>7</sup> Langdell separates theory from practice, focusing solely on legal theory education.<sup>8</sup>

Despite ongoing criticism, the case method remains the dominant approach in legal education in the United States and Canada and has been widely adopted in many countries worldwide. Most agree that the strength of the case method lies not in the knowledge it imparts but in its cultivation of analytical skills. Despite the extensive criticism directed at this pedagogical paradigm, no viable alternative has emerged to replace it. Rote teaching methods cannot make a comeback, the ambiguous intertwining of law and social sciences has never threatened the core status of the case method, and the rapidly advancing clinic-style legal education reform has only had a minor formal impact on it. The case method has been, and remains clearly the best method of legal education.<sup>9</sup>

However, criticism of the lack of practicality in legal education has persisted in the United States: the current legal education reform movement is built upon a century of criticism and recommendations for reform. Experts have called for reform in a series of reports, including the 1879 American Bar Association report published, the Redlich reports of 1890 and 1914, the Reed report of 1921, the Carrington report of 1971, the Crampton report of 1979, the 1982 McTear Report, the 2007 Klea Best

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Practices Report, and the 2007 Carnegie Report. These reports and other analyses have consistently criticized law schools for overemphasizing the teaching of legal theory and analytical skills at the expense of practical legal training.<sup>10</sup> In the context of poor employment prospects for law school graduates, the deficiency of insufficient practicality in legal education becomes even more evident. The backdrop for the renewed focus on making legal education more practical is the bleak job market for lawyers.<sup>11</sup> In the United States, there have even been cases where law school graduates, dissatisfied with employment prospects, sued their alma maters for allegedly exaggerating graduate employment rates. Scholars have also noted the cost pressures practical training imposes on law schools. These criticisms of legal education push law schools toward two seemingly contradictory goals: (1) providing more practical training for more students, and (2) reducing operational costs.

### (ii) The Practical Orientation of Legal Education in China: From Imitating to Developing Distinctive Characteristics

The growing emphasis on the practicality of legal education has become a global consensus. What should be the objectives and requirements of a practice-oriented approach to legal education?

In response to societal calls for improved practical teaching, the United States has continuously refined its law school curricula and accreditation standards, thereby enriching the content of practical legal education. The American Bar Association (ABA) established the “Future of Legal Education Task Force”, tasked with reviewing current issues and conditions in U.S. legal education and proposing feasible recommendations with a reasonable chance of widespread acceptance. Its 2014 report stated: “The common core purpose of all law schools is to prepare individuals to provide legal and related services in a professional and responsible manner. This fundamental fact is often downplayed. There is a call for greater emphasis on skill training, experiential learning, and the development of practice-related competencies, and many law schools have expanded opportunities for students to prepare for practice. However, more work needs to be done”. In its “2024–2025 Law School Accreditation Standards”, the ABA’s Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar require: “Law schools should offer one or more experiential courses that each student must complete, totaling at least six credits. Experiential courses must be simulation courses, legal clinics, or field internships”. Additionally, such experiential courses have detailed and specific definitions and course design requirements.

Chinese scholars have also consistently emphasized the practical orientation of legal education. Since the reform and opening-up, China’s legal education has always taken “the integration of theory and practice” as the main thread of reform. President Xi emphasized that “law is a highly practice-oriented discipline”, thereby anchoring the fundamental direction of China’s legal education. From the perspective of domestic practice, the practical orientation of China’s legal education has a dual connotation: on one hand, it must inherit the tradition of “explaining legal principles through cases”, such as strengthening legal interpretation and application capabilities through “guiding case” teaching; on the other hand, it must also confront the legal challenges of the new era, innovating in fields such as artificial intelligence, data governance, and the resolution of cross-border disputes. Chinese scholars also emphasize the practical orientation of legal studies. Social sciences and legal studies primarily belong to “practical-oriented” research, with the goal of resolving inconsistencies between factual realities and theoretical frameworks.<sup>12</sup> The stronger the practicality of criminal law doctrine, the higher its verifiability

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and credibility; however, China’s criminal law has significant room for improvement in addressing practical challenges.<sup>13</sup> The practical orientation is particularly evident in certain applied legal education programs: unlike academic talent cultivation models, legal education programs related to international engineering exhibit a strong practical orientation in the setting of educational objectives.<sup>14</sup>

Professor He Meihuan believes that legal professional education should provide training in intelligent skills, which refer to the ability to use symbols and constitute a procedural form of cognition. Specific content should include skills training in identifying legal issues and constructing effective and relevant arguments on legal issues; intelligent skills differ from practical skills such as drafting legal documents or delivering compelling oral or written arguments in various settings. She does not recommend transforming all legal courses into skill-development courses but suggests modifying only some courses for this purpose, while reclassifying others as knowledge-transmission courses.<sup>15</sup> Professor Huang Wenyi argues that practical teaching courses primarily focus on imparting legal practical knowledge and experience, with internships and training in legal institutions as the main form of instruction. Their primary objective is to cultivate students’ practical abilities and real-world skills.

The above views all reflect the in-depth consideration of the practical origins of legal education in China. The Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China explicitly called for “improving the education and training mechanism of law schools oriented toward practice”, marking that China’s legal education is transitioning from a stage primarily focused on the transmission of theoretical knowledge to a new phase of high-quality development centered on the cultivation of practical abilities.

### **The Challenges Facing Legal Education in China: The Reality of Knowledge-Oriented Education and the Need for Transformation**

#### **(i) Multiple Issues Related to Weak Practicality: The Obsolescence of Traditional Models**

Although a practice-oriented approach has become the consensus, legal education in China still faces the dilemma of “knowing is easy, doing is hard”. In terms of teaching content, textbooks lag behind legal practice, and there is a lack of summary of cutting-edge practical experience in emerging fields such as “personal information protection”, “platform economy antitrust”, and other emerging fields, with classroom instructions still primarily focused on legal commentary and rarely delving into the deeper practical logic such as “rule creation”, “interest balancing”, and “scenario-based compliance”. Traditional practical forms such as mock trials are often limited to simulating court proceedings, with training on core aspects like evidence cross-examination, strategic maneuvering, and courtroom rhetoric remaining superficial; legal clinics are constrained by the lack of legal standing for students and inadequate risk control mechanisms, making it difficult to handle and discuss complex cases, thereby limiting both social and educational benefits; in professional internships, students often find themselves stuck in administrative tasks such as document sorting, with limited opportunities to participate in substantive legal matters, leading to the situation where “after a month of internship, little is gained”.

The primary causes of these challenges are as follows: first, teaching content remains focused on the transmission of traditional legal knowledge and theory, with insufficient emphasis on the progresses,

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achievements, and lessons learned from China’s current legal practice; second, traditional practical teaching methods such as mock trials, legal clinics, and professional internships lack sufficient alignment with real-world legal practice; third, there is a lack of adaptation to new practical teaching methods involving digital technology and artificial intelligence; fourth, opportunities for international legal practice teaching are scarce and costly; fifth, teaching evaluations remain theory- and knowledge-oriented, with course assessments still primarily focused on knowledge and theory, and the legal professional qualification exam still containing a significant proportion of knowledge-based questions, while legal master’s theses are primarily academic in nature.

This has led to the unfavorable situation described by Professor Zhang Wenxian, where the pass rate for Chinese law graduates applying to the International Criminal Court is extremely low,<sup>16</sup> and as pointed out by Professor He Meihuan, Chinese law schools are unable to cultivate a large number of high-end international legal professionals,<sup>15</sup> which has yet to be reversed.

### **(ii) The Contemporary Challenges of Practical Teaching in the New Era: Multi-dimensional Challenges Driving Reform and Innovation**

At this historical juncture where the comprehensive advancement of rule of law intersects with the technological revolution, practical teaching in legal education is undergoing profound structural challenges. The new era of rule of law construction poses a “breakthrough question” for legal education. These challenges stem both from the strategic demands of modernizing national governance and from the disruptive transformations in the legal industry ecosystem, collectively outlining the urgent need for reform in practical teaching.

#### **1. The Contemporary Challenge of Value-Driven Leadership Takes Center Stage**

As the deepening of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics progresses, practical teaching is no longer confined to the cultivation of legal skills but also bears the solemn responsibility of disseminating legal civilization and fostering a deep-rooted belief in the rule of law. Currently, China has seen a wealth of vibrant legal practices emerge in areas such as grassroots governance, social welfare, and technological innovation—from the evolution of the “Fengqiao Experience” into a legal model for grassroots social governance, to the new forms of rights protection practices spurred by the implementation of the Personal Information Protection Law.

These developments provide a fertile ground for practical legal education. For example, in legal clinic courses, topics such as “compliance reviews of community elderly care services” and “mediation of land transfer disputes in rural revitalization” are introduced. When handling specific cases, students not only gain an understanding of the operational logic of grassroots legal systems but also deeply grasp the core value of China’s legal system, which is “people-centered”. This model of naturally integrating ideological and political elements into legal practice training is reshaping the educational logic of legal education, enabling students to build confidence in the rule of law while solving real-world problems and avoiding the pitfall of “technological instrumentalism”.

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### **2. The Technological Revolution is Reshaping Legal Practice and Accelerating the Smart Transformation of Practical Teaching**

The widespread adoption of technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain has shifted legal work from “experience-driven” to “data-driven”, with new scenarios such as smart contract review and judicial big data analysis emerging constantly. Traditional teaching methods like mock trials and case analysis are no longer sufficient to address cutting-edge issues like “algorithmic discrimination in legal determinations” and “liability allocation in accidents involving intelligent connected vehicles”.

The exploration by the School of Law at BIT is particularly enlightening: our school has developed an “Intelligent Technology Risk Legal Prevention Virtual Simulation Platform” based on the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology’s key laboratory. Students can simulate handling complex issues such as “cross-border data flow compliance assessment” and “copyright ownership of generative artificial intelligence” in a virtual environment, and through “human–machine interaction”, students master a composite analytical framework combining “legal rules and technical principles”. Additionally, the “Legal Technology Internship Base” co-built with technology companies allows students to participate in real-world projects such as “establishing an AI ethics committee for enterprises” and “legal compliance verification of blockchain evidence systems”, fostering “technology-sensitive” legal thinking on the front lines of technology application and effectively bridging the “technology gap” between education and industry.

### **3. The Profound Transformation of Global Governance Demands Higher Standards for Foreign-Related Legal Education**

As the Belt and Road Initiative progresses, China’s involvement in areas such as the reconstruction of international trade rules and the development of outer space governance systems has significantly increased, necessitating a large number of composite talents who are “well-versed in international rules and skilled in cross-border legal practice”. However, traditional foreign-related legal education often remains at the level of interpreting international legal provisions, lacking comprehensive training in “rule application + negotiation and bargaining + cultural adaptation”.

In response, practical teaching is attempting to transition from “theoretical discussions” to “simulated real-world scenarios”: on one hand, it introduces real-world cases from international organizations for scenario-based simulations, such as organizing students to role-play as “Chinese and American representatives in the WTO dispute settlement mechanism” and conduct debate exercises around “disputes over digital trade tariffs”, while inviting international arbitrators to provide practical guidance; on the other hand, relying on the “Cooperative Training Base for Foreign-Related Legal Talent”, students are dispatched to internships at institutions including the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Commercial Dispute Prevention and Settlement Organization (ICDPASO), where they are able to gain the ability to express “Chinese perspectives and proposals” at the scene of international rule-making. This three-dimensional training of “classroom simulation—institutional internship—international participation” is cultivating “legal diplomacy talent” capable of effectively safeguarding national interests in global governance.



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### **4. The Rapid Development of Professional Degree Education Calls for Tiered and Refined Practical Training.**

The expansion of the Master of Laws (LL.M.) and Doctor of Laws (J.D.) programs has made the distinction between “academic-oriented” and “practical-oriented” talent cultivation more pronounced. For Master of Laws students, the teaching evaluation system is shifting from a “thesis-oriented” to a “problem-oriented” model, encouraging the substitution of traditional academic theses with practical outcomes such as the “Handbook on Legal Risks of Overseas Investment by Enterprises” and the “Report on the Construction of a Compliance Management System for Local Governments”, emphasizing the ability to “solve real-world problems”.

For Doctor of Laws (practical track) students, research topics must closely align with practical needs such as judicial reform and social governance, such as “Technical Implementation Pathways for the Uniform Judgment Mechanism for Similar Cases” and “Research on the Standardization of Comprehensive Law Enforcement at the Grassroots Level”, ensuring that research outcomes can be directly converted into policy recommendations or industry standards. This “demand-driven education” and “customized training” reform is addressing the disconnect between professional degree education and occupational demands, enabling talent cultivation to more precisely align with the diverse needs of legal practice.

These intertwined and mutually reinforcing contemporary challenges all point to a core consensus: legal practice-oriented education must break free from traditional frameworks, establish a solid foundation through value-driven guidance, explore new horizons through technological empowerment, broaden its perspective through global engagement, and highlight its unique characteristics through tiered cultivation. Only in this way can we cultivate outstanding legal professionals who understand China’s national conditions and are capable of addressing future challenges, thereby providing a solid talent foundation for the modernization of national governance.

### **Adhering to Tradition while Innovating: Building a Practical Teaching System with “Two-Wing Synergy and Three-Dimensional Collaboration”**

In a new era where intelligent technology is reshaping the practice of law and global governance calls for foreign-related legal talent, the shift toward practical legal education has evolved from a shared concept to a practical endeavor. The School of Law at BIT has firmly established the foundation of “adhering to tradition” while boldly exploring the path of “innovation”. By taking “intelligent technology law” and “international law” as the driving “two wings”, it has constructed a “three-dimensional” training system featuring “differentiated undergraduate education, industry—academia integration in master’s programs, and a dual-track system for doctoral development”. This system both upholds the fundamental principles of cultivating legal professional competence and breaks through the boundaries of traditional legal education.

By deeply integrating intelligent technology empowerment and international legal needs into the training program, the school has broken down disciplinary barriers in course design, aligned practical training with real-world scenarios, and emphasized a practice-oriented evaluation system, thereby exploring a

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new path for practical teaching that combines Chinese characteristics with contemporary features. This reform not only responds to the national strategy of “cultivating outstanding legal talent with both moral integrity and legal expertise”, but also provides an innovative model for the high-quality development of legal education in the new era through its distinctive breakthroughs in “two wings” and the integration of “three dimensions”.

### **(i) Policy Orientation on Legal Practice Education in China**

In recent years, China’s education policies have consistently emphasized the practical orientation of legal education. In 2012, the Ministry of Education and other departments issued the “Opinions on Further Strengthening Practical Education in Higher Education Institutions”, which stated that the proportion of practical teaching should be increased, ensuring that humanities and social sciences undergraduate programs account for no less than 15% of total credits (class hours), and that professional degree master’s programs include no less than six months of practical training.

In 2018, the Ministry of Education and the Central Political and Legal Affairs Commission issued the “Opinions on Adhering to the Integration of Morality and Law and Implementing the Excellence in Legal Talent Education and Training Program 2.0”, which proposed as follows: emphasize practice and strengthen the core of legal education; efforts should be made to strengthen legal professional knowledge education, incorporating the latest experiences and vivid cases from China’s legal practice, as well as the latest research findings on the theoretical framework of socialism with Chinese characteristics, into classrooms and textbooks, and promptly converting them into teaching resources.

The 2023 Opinions of the Two Offices proposed the following: updating and improving the legal professional curriculum system, and advancing the construction of legal professional theoretical teaching courses and practical teaching courses in an integrated manner; strengthen legal practical teaching, deepen collaborative education, and promote in-depth coordination between law schools and legal work departments in the formulation of talent cultivation plans, course construction, textbook construction, student internships, and practical training; accelerate the cultivation of urgently needed foreign-related legal talent with an international perspective and proficiency in international law and comparative law. The Ministry of Education’s “Opinions on Strengthening the Cultivation of Foreign-Related Legal Talent” explicitly proposes “building a composite legal talent pool that understands international rules and adapts to high-level opening up”. The project addresses the talent gap in the “science and technology + law” interdisciplinary field, serving as a direct implementation of foreign-related legal base construction and support for the “Global Development Initiative” and “Global Security Initiative”.

### **(ii) Reforming Traditional Practical Teaching: Strengthening Foundations and Building a Solid Base**

Traditional practical forms serve as the “ballast” of legal education, bearing the core function of cultivating legal professional competence. Under the complex demands of legal practice in the new era, its value is not diminished but urgently needs to be revitalized—it is necessary to innovate forms while retaining the essence, enhance effectiveness while inheriting experience, and enable classic platforms such as mock trials, legal clinics, and professional internships to break through the bottlenecks of “process-oriented” and “performance-oriented” approaches, truly becoming bridges connecting theory

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and practice <sup>[17]</sup>. By restructuring training logic, improving institutional safeguards, and precisely aligning with practical needs, traditional practical teaching is transitioning from “formality preservation” to “substantive empowerment”, laying a solid practical foundation for legal talent in the new era.

### **1. Mock Trials: From “Competitive Performance” to “Full-Scale Practical Training”**

To address the current situation where “few participate and many observe”, mock trials should be incorporated into the required course curriculum. For example, BIT offers “Mock Court on Outer Space Law (Bilingual)”, using international space law competitions and the Jessup International Law Mock Court as platforms. Students are required to fully participate in document drafting, courtroom debates, and legal research, with teachers, judges, and lawyers providing joint feedback. This transforms the classroom into a “miniature judicial arena”, achieving a leap from “process simulation” to “legal thinking training”.

### **2. Legal Clinics: Dual-Drive Approach of Risk Prevention and Domain Expansion.**

Resolving these issues requires enhanced collaboration between judicial and educational departments for coordinated talent development, top-level design, and the introduction of insurance mechanisms to mitigate risks. First, the types and scope of legal clinics should be expanded to include criminal law clinics, labor law clinics, women and children’s law clinics, and disability law clinics targeting vulnerable groups, as well as intellectual property law clinics for economically disadvantaged intellectual property rights holders. Second, judicial and political departments should establish relevant regulations to grant students at legal clinics formal, relatively professional legal representative status, enabling them to participate in investigations, court proceedings, and mediation activities. Third, drawing on the professional liability insurance for lawyers, establish business insurance for legal clinics to compensate clients for economic losses caused by the negligence of clinic students, thereby ensuring the healthy development of legal clinic education. Fourth, break away from traditional civil and criminal fields and establish “artificial intelligence ethics clinics” and “cross-border data compliance clinics” to serve both technology companies and vulnerable groups, allowing students to gain practical experience in addressing cutting-edge issues such as “algorithmic discrimination” and “cross-border data flow disputes”.

### **3. Professional Internships: Balancing Precise Matching and Diverse Evaluation.**

Tasks such as filing and organizing documents are also part of the work students should understand and master, as they constitute a component of labor education. In practical units such as patent agencies and law firms, business process management is also a critical task that must be executed without error; however, as law students, they should primarily engage in substantive legal work, such as accompanying lawyers in client consultations, participating in client negotiations, drafting legal documents, observing court proceedings, or serving as intern judicial assistants or intern prosecutorial assistants in judicial or prosecutorial proceedings. The improvement of internship work requires strengthened communication and collaboration between law schools and practical departments, continuous refinement of evaluation mechanisms, recognition of outstanding performance, and the gradual formation of a positive and effective cooperative atmosphere.

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Based on this, the School of Law at BIT has implemented an “internship position menu system”, where courts, procuratorates, law firms, and enterprises provide substantive positions such as “judicial assistant” and “compliance officer”, and clearly define internship task lists (e.g. independently drafting contracts, participating in case analysis). A “process-based evaluation + outcome-oriented” assessment system has been established, incorporating criteria such as the quality of legal documents and the adoption of case handling recommendations into the scoring standards to prevent internships from becoming mere formalities.

### (iii) Innovative Breakthroughs in Practical Teaching in the New Era: BIT Law School’s “Two-Wing Synergy” in Practical Education

Building on a foundation of upholding principles, the School of Law at BIT has established “intelligent technology law” and “foreign-related law” as its “two wings”, creating a differentiated practical teaching model that precisely addresses the needs of the times:

#### 1. Intelligent Technology Law Wing: Empowered by Technology, Creating a New “Law + X” Ecosystem.

The school relies on the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology’s “Intelligent Technology Risk Legal Prevention Laboratory” to construct an integrated chain of “courses–platform–training”: in terms of course design, it offers cutting-edge courses such as “Artificial Intelligence Law” and “Blockchain Legal Regulation”, analyzing new legal issues such as liability determination in autonomous driving accidents and copyright ownership in generative artificial intelligence; regarding technological empowerment, it has developed a virtual simulation teaching platform to simulate scenarios such as algorithmic discrimination dispute mediation and cross-border data flow compliance reviews, enabling students to master the analytical framework for technology-related legal issues through “human–machine” interaction; as for practical training, the school has partnered with Xiaobaogong, Tencent, Sina, Huawei, and others to establish internship bases, where students participate in real-world projects such as “smart contract code review” and “corporate data compliance system construction”. This approach cultivates composite talents who understand both technological principles and legal regulations, addressing the shortage of legal professionals in the era of intelligent technology.

Since 2018, the School of Law at BIT has collaborated with North University of China Law Database to explore deeper integration between legal education and technology. In 2024, the summer internship at Peking University Law School placed special emphasis on the construction of intelligent agents based on generative artificial intelligence, providing students with an intelligent agent construction platform and organizing them to engage in intelligent agent construction activities based on real legal practice scenarios.

At the end of the internship, an intelligent agent development competition was held. Participants focused on three practical scenarios—mock trials, people’s mediation, and intelligent question–and–answer systems—demonstrating their ability to combine theoretical knowledge with technological applications.

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### **2. International Legal Wing: Global Perspective, Building a “Rule–Practice–Governance” Full Chain**

Following the approval of the “Innovative Base for Collaborative Cultivation of Foreign-Related Legal Talent” in 2024, the School of Law at BIT has established deep collaborations with the International Commercial Dispute Prevention and Resolution Organization and the Asia–Pacific Space Cooperation Organization: At the course level, it offers “International Science and Technology Organization Law” (bilingual) and “Digital Trade Rules and Chinese Practice”, inviting officials from international organizations to lecture on the WTO dispute resolution mechanism and international investment arbitration practices; At the practical level, a pathway has been established for “international organization internships, cross-border legal negotiations, and global rule research”. Students can participate in policy consultations at the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development or play the role of “national representatives” in mock international court competitions to practice the interpretation of international treaties and dispute resolution. At the research level, relying on the “Global Governance and Science and Technology Ethics Research Institute”, students are encouraged to participate in research topics such as “Belt and Road” investment rule innovation and the construction of outer space governance systems, transforming academic achievements into “Chinese solutions” for international negotiations, and cultivating “legal diplomats” with both a sense of national pride and a global perspective.

#### **(iv) Three-dimensional Co-construction: A Comprehensive Advancement of the Practical Training System Across All Academic Levels**

With “two wings” as its distinctive support, the School of Law at BIT has further developed a “three-dimensional” training system that integrates undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral programs, enabling a spiral-shaped improvement in practical abilities:

##### **1. Undergraduate Stage: Targeted Training to Establish a Solid Practical Foundation**

The school launched the only dual degree program in law and artificial intelligence approved by the Ministry of Education in 2021, which has now run for four sessions, having trained 120 students. The program adopts a composite training model combining “core law courses + computer science fundamentals + technology governance modules”. Students must study the Civil Code and the Data Security Law while also acquiring skills in Python data processing and blockchain technology principles. Upon graduation, they must complete interdisciplinary capstone projects such as “Legal Risk Assessment of Smart Contracts”, targeting emerging roles in corporate legal affairs for technology companies and compliance for internet platforms.

Additionally, the school launched the “International Legal Elite Program” in 2024, collaborating with the School of Foreign Languages and the International Organizations Innovation School to implement a “Legal English Intensive + International Rules Reading + Overseas Internship” plan. Students must undergo “immersive” training through simulated WTO dispute resolution and participation in international organization internships to master skills such as cross-border investment compliance review and drafting international commercial arbitration documents, becoming a reserve force for international legal affairs with “strong language skills, familiarity with rules, and negotiation prowess”.

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The school also places great emphasis on strengthening legal education fundamentals, continuing to offer the “Legal Studies Specialized Class” to solidify the foundation of legal education and reinforce a “grassroots legal practice” orientation. Through projects such as “Community Legal Advisor” and “Court Expedited Trial Internship”, students engage directly with practical issues like marital and family disputes and neighborhood conflict mediation, cultivating pragmatic, competent local legal professionals who underpin the grassroots development of the rule of law in China.

### **2. Master’s Degree: Industry–Academia Integration with a Clear Practical Focus.**

Full-time master’s programs focus on cutting-edge areas such as “Intelligent Technology Law” and “Foreign-Related Economic Law”, leveraging research platforms to undertake national key projects (e.g. “Research on the Legal Liability System for Autonomous Driving”), participating in the formulation of judicial interpretations by the Supreme People’s Court and local legislative research, and writing papers based on frontline legal practice. Part-time master’s programs implement an “industry mentor system”, collaborating with corporate legal departments and law firms to establish “compliance management workshops” and “Intellectual Property Protection Projects”, requiring students to submit practical outcomes such as “Legal Risk Assessment Reports for Corporate Overseas Investments”, achieving learning as practice, graduation as employment readiness.

### **3. Doctoral Program: Dual-Track Approach Serving National Strategic Needs.**

Doctor of Law programs emphasize theoretical depth, conducting foundational research in areas such as “Legal Regulation of Artificial Intelligence Ethics” and “Construction of Global Digital Governance Rules”, providing intellectual support for innovations in legal principles; Doctor of Law (Practical Track) students focus on practical topics such as judicial reform and social governance, with requirements that their outcomes possess policy conversion value (e.g. promoting the unification of trial rules for certain types of cases), forming a dual-drive framework where “academic PhDs emphasize theory and legal PhDs emphasize application”, meeting the diverse demands of the nation for high-end legal talent.

#### **(v) Quality Assurance: Diverse Mechanisms to Strengthen the Foundation of Practical Teaching**

The implementation of practical teaching requires three supporting mechanisms: faculty, evaluation, and resources. Concerning faculty development, a mixed team of “in-house professors + judges/lawyers + international experts” is formed, with practical mentors required to teach at least 30% of the courses to ensure alignment between classroom instruction and practical applications; in terms of evaluation reform, a multi-dimensional assessment system combining “knowledge mastery, practical innovation, and professional ethics” has been established. Legal master’s students may choose to submit “case analysis reports” or “compliance scheme designs” instead of traditional theses, with practical experts leading the defense process to emphasize the practical orientation of outcomes; as for resource integration, we have connected judicial big data, international rules databases, and corporate compliance case repositories. Leveraging the “Smart Rule of Law Laboratory”, we have achieved comprehensive virtual simulation-based teaching, enabling students to gain practical experience in “cloud courts” and “cross-border transaction simulation platforms”.

## **Conclusion**

From paper to the cloud, from local roots to global reach, the practical essence of legal education has always flowed through the pulse of the times. The School of Law at BIT soars into the dual blue oceans of science and technology law and international governance with its “two-wing synergy”, and builds a cultivation hub spanning undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral programs through its “three-dimensional collaboration”. This is both a steadfast commitment to the original mission of “cultivating talent for the Party and the nation” and an innovative interpretation of the mission of “cultivating both virtue and law, and uniting knowledge with action”. This exploration has enabled legal education to transcend the limitations of knowledge transmission, fostering new opportunities through the collision of intelligent technology and legal practice, and opening up new horizons through the integration of domestic experience and international rules.

Looking ahead, we must adopt a broader perspective to break down barriers between schools and society, connecting classrooms with courtrooms and laboratories with practical settings. Every case discussion should serve as a rehearsal for social governance, and every simulated training session should become the prototype for rule innovation. Only in this way can we cultivate outstanding talents who understand technical principles and the essence of rules, are familiar with international paradigms and uphold the spirit of China—they can build legal defenses in algorithm governance and tell the story of China’s rule of law in international negotiations; they can work hard at the grassroots level to resolve conflicts and disputes, and stand on the global stage to participate in the reconstruction of rules.

On this new journey, legal education must take practice as its vessel, ride the wave of the technological revolution, and hoist the sail of foreign-related rule of law. It must forge ahead on the path of cultivating talent who are “politically steadfast, professionally competent, well-versed in international rules, and proficient in foreign-related legal practice”, providing more “talent who can research legal theory with a pen, resolve people’s concerns with a bow, and look ahead to plan for the greater good”. The abundant fruits of practice-oriented education will become the most solid legal foundation for advancing China’s modernization.

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The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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- Shouping Li: Conceptualization, Formal Analysis, Methodology, Writing- original draft.
- Dezhong Guo: Methodology, Writing - review & editing.
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