

# Optimizing Social Training Pathways for Higher Vocational Colleges in Jiujiang

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**Abstract:** *As Jiujiang City advances the development of its “Three Regional Centers” and implements the “9610” Manufacturing Action Plan, the demand for technically skilled professionals continues to grow. Higher vocational colleges, as the backbone of the vocational education system, play an increasingly vital role in supporting regional development through their social training functions. Using Jiangxi Polytechnic University as a case study, this paper reviews the policy context, current status, and implementation practices of social training in Jiujiang. It identifies key challenges in areas such as qualification standards, training supply capacity, institutional mechanisms, and digital transformation. Drawing on successful models from more developed regions, the study proposes seven optimization strategies: establishing a government-school-enterprise coordination mechanism, enhancing qualification recognition, promoting project-based training, refining incentive systems, integrating online and offline delivery, improving outcome certification and feedback processes, and expanding services for key target groups. This research aims to provide theoretical foundations and practical guidance for enhancing the quality and impact of social training in higher vocational colleges across Jiujiang.*

**Keywords:** Higher vocational colleges; Social training; Jiujiang City; Pathway optimization; Education policy.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the high-quality development of China's economy and society, the cultivation of technically skilled professionals has become a central focus of national strategy [1]. During his 2023 visit to Jiangxi Province, President Xi Jinping emphasized the need to vigorously develop port-centered economies, position Jiujiang as a key node in the Yangtze River Economic Belt, and build it into a regional logistics and commercial hub. These national directives have elevated the expectations for local vocational education institutions, assigning them a more prominent role in supporting regional development goals [2].

Jiujiang is currently at a pivotal stage in its transition toward high-quality development. The municipal government has articulated a vision to develop “Three Regional Centers” — in manufacturing, cultural tourism, and shipping — and is actively advancing the “9610” Manufacturing Action Plan. These strategies have created an unprecedented demand for a highly skilled workforce, both in terms of scale and specialization [3][4]. At the same time, the emergence of new occupations and the transformation of traditional roles have driven increasingly diverse needs for employee upskilling, job-readiness training for key groups, and early-stage vocational education [5][6]. These evolving dynamics require higher vocational colleges in Jiujiang to adapt proactively by expanding their training capacity and improving service quality.

Social training is not only a statutory duty clearly defined by the Vocational Education Law, but also a strategic lever for strengthening the vocational identity of institutions and supporting their transformation and development [7]. Through high-quality training programs, colleges can better meet the talent demands associated with industrial upgrading, while also expanding institutional influence, optimizing resource use, and enhancing their reputation and social impact [8]. However, persistent challenges—such as fragmented institutional arrangements, insufficient resource allocation, and underdeveloped operational mechanisms—continue to undermine the effectiveness of training efforts.

Against this backdrop, this study examines the structure and optimization of social training pathways in Jiujiang's higher vocational colleges. By analyzing relevant national, provincial, and municipal policies; evaluating the implementation practices and challenges of Jiangxi Polytechnic University; and drawing insights from advanced regions, the paper explores how to align social training systems with local economic development needs. Using a mixed-methods approach—policy analysis, case studies, and field research—the study proposes actionable recommendations to enhance the performance, responsiveness, and strategic relevance of social training across Jiujiang's vocational education sector.

## **2. DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT AND POLICY ENVIRONMENT**

Jiujiang City, located in the northern part of Jiangxi Province, serves as a strategic link between China's central region and the Yangtze River Economic Belt. It possesses distinct geographical advantages and a solid industrial base. In recent years, under the leadership of the Jiangxi Provincial Party Committee and Provincial Government, Jiujiang has actively implemented the strategy of "building a key node city along the Yangtze River Economic Belt to high standards." This includes the development vision of creating "three regional centers" and "one beautiful home." A series of supportive policies have been introduced to encourage local higher education institutions to contribute to regional economic development, with a particular focus on the cultivation of skilled talent and the expansion of vocational training responsibilities.

At the national level, China has placed increasing emphasis on vocational education and social training in recent years. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security issued the Notice on the Implementation of the Revised Vocational Education Law, which calls for the integrated advancement of talent cultivation, evaluation, deployment, and incentive systems, while also strengthening the link between vocational education and employment outcomes [9]. Similarly, the Ministry of Education released the Action Plan for Vocational Colleges to Fully Promote Employment and Entrepreneurship through Skills Training, which promotes the integration of vocational education and social training and highlights the central role of higher vocational institutions as platforms for delivering large-scale skills development programs [10]. These national policies provide strong institutional and financial support for higher vocational colleges seeking to expand their social training services.

At the provincial level, Jiangxi's leadership has prioritized the enhancement of vocational education and the improvement of skilled labor supply. The Jiangxi Provincial Department of Human Resources and Social Security has issued multiple policy documents—including the Measures for the Management of Employment Subsidy Funds in Jiangxi Province and the Measures for the Management of Vocational Training Subsidies—which encourage vocational colleges to participate in employment and entrepreneurship training. These policies offer support in the form of funding, project approval processes, and performance evaluations. They also emphasize the importance of leveraging institutional resources to establish training bases that connect directly with employment and entrepreneurship initiatives.

As a focal point for development among Jiangxi's riverside cities, Jiujiang has introduced targeted local policies, such as the Implementation Opinions on Supporting Jiujiang in Building a High-Standard Key Node City Along the Yangtze River Economic Belt and the Regional Science and Technology Center Development Plan. These documents identify skilled talent cultivation as a core development priority. Furthermore, the city has established a dedicated training fund for employment and entrepreneurship initiatives, which offers differentiated subsidies based on the needs of specific training populations and occupational categories. This provides strong fiscal support for vocational colleges undertaking social training activities.

## **3. ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION**

The social training function of higher vocational colleges reflects not only national policy direction but also the practical need to serve regional socio-economic development [11]. Through a review of industrial trends, policy support mechanisms, and the operational experience of Jiangxi Polytechnic University (formerly Jiujiang Vocational and Technical College), a comprehensive picture emerges regarding the current status, resource capacity, and effectiveness of social training at higher vocational institutions in Jiujiang.

First, from an external perspective, demand for social training in Jiujiang is strong. On the one hand, the city's promotion of industrial transformation—particularly across nine major manufacturing chains, including electronics, new energy, and equipment manufacturing—has intensified employers' needs for specialized, application-oriented, and efficient skills training. On the other hand, a variety of public training programs—such as employment skills training, entrepreneurship training, and veteran retraining—are organized annually by the municipal human resources and social security system. Participation levels remain high. Under the combined influence of policy incentives and market needs, the size of the social training market continues to grow steadily.

Second, in terms of institutional practice, Jiangxi Polytechnic University has developed a strong foundation in social training, both in terms of infrastructure and organizational capacity. The university offers multiple discipline clusters—including mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, construction, information technology, and business management—that align closely with regional industrial needs and provide robust training resources. It

has also established collaborative partnerships with various government departments, including those responsible for employment, transportation, and maritime affairs, and has implemented several training programs such as inland shipping crew training, veteran reskilling, and on-the-job enterprise training.

Third, regarding training participants and content, the university serves a diverse range of learner groups, including incumbent workers, former fishermen, military veterans, and other priority employment populations. Training programs cover fields such as e-commerce, construction, IT, transportation, and logistics. The institution is also able to design customized courses to meet the needs of different industries. For instance, in policy-sponsored programs, training in occupations such as e-commerce specialists, digital marketers, and software developers comprises nearly 30% of total program enrollment.

Fourth, the university possesses strong faculty capabilities and high-quality practical training facilities. Most instructors have “dual-professional” qualifications, enabling them to integrate theoretical instruction with hands-on skills training. The university’s modern training centers provide realistic simulation environments for electrical maintenance, ship operations, and construction work. Moreover, the institution emphasizes industry–academia collaboration and has gradually established a comprehensive support system for social training, helping to ensure consistent improvements in training quality and outcomes.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

Despite notable progress in the social training efforts of Jiujiang’s higher vocational colleges, multiple structural and operational challenges persist. These include limitations in institutional frameworks, resource allocation, program development, and market outreach—issues that demand urgent attention and strategic intervention.

First, the lack of requisite training qualifications weakens the institutions’ market competitiveness. Currently, the university has not been certified as a “social training evaluation organization,” making it ineligible to independently conduct vocational skill assessments or access government subsidies for policy-oriented training. Furthermore, it lacks the special accreditations required to offer training in niche fields such as hazardous operations, special equipment, and high-quality agricultural training. This significantly hampers its ability to secure public training contracts or serve enterprise clients, restricting market expansion opportunities.

Second, there exists a structural mismatch between training supply and evolving market demand. Enterprises are increasingly seeking highly customized and occupation-specific training programs aligned with industry standards and real-world job functions. However, the college’s curriculum remains oriented toward degree education, which limits its agility in responding to short-cycle, rapid-deployment training demands. In addition, some instructors lack hands-on industry experience and practical teaching capabilities, reducing the effectiveness and relevance of training, thereby diminishing participant satisfaction.

Third, internal mechanisms for training delivery remain underdeveloped, leading to operational inefficiencies. A dedicated department for social training has not been established, and responsibilities are often dispersed across academic units on a part-time basis. This results in unclear accountability, weak coordination, and ineffective resource integration. Moreover, the absence of clear governance structures and streamlined processes has led to cumbersome program management and poor interdepartmental coordination. A lack of systematic evaluation and incentive mechanisms further contributes to disengagement among faculty and departments, perpetuating a scenario where administrative enthusiasm fails to translate into broad institutional buy-in.

Fourth, the institution lacks a coherent brand strategy and market development capacity. Current training initiatives are largely reactive, driven by government programs or external partnerships, with limited proactive engagement in the commercial training market. The absence of unified branding and strategic marketing has prevented the formation of a stable client base, reducing resilience to market fluctuations. Weak repeat business and underdeveloped long-term enterprise relationships indicate that training outcomes have yet to translate into sustained institutional influence.

Fifth, digital infrastructure to support training remains inadequate, and capacity for digital transformation is limited. With the rise of online education and smart learning platforms, digital delivery is becoming the new standard in vocational training. However, the university has not yet established a dedicated digital management platform for its social training programs. Training data are fragmented, real-time monitoring is difficult, and quality assurance remains inconsistent—undermining efforts to personalize services or evaluate impact. The lack

of an integrated “online + offline” hybrid model also weakens competitiveness in securing emerging training contracts.

## **5. LESSONS AND INSIGHTS FROM DEVELOPED REGIONS**

In regions with mature vocational education systems and efficient training infrastructures—such as Shenzhen in Guangdong, Suzhou in Jiangsu, and Ningbo in Zhejiang—higher vocational institutions have accumulated extensive experience in advancing social training programs. A comparative analysis of their approaches offers valuable insights for Jiujiang as it seeks to optimize its training pathways and improve overall service quality.

Shenzhen has established a robust government–school–enterprise collaborative framework for vocational training. The municipal government leads the initiative by creating a dedicated vocational skills training fund and maintaining a centralized project database. Enterprises submit specific training needs, and vocational colleges deliver customized programs in an “order-based” model. This tripartite mechanism clarifies responsibilities and benefit-sharing among stakeholders, ensuring that training projects are effectively managed and aligned with labor market demand. Particularly in emerging sectors such as artificial intelligence and digital manufacturing, Shenzhen has launched targeted programs for urgently needed talents, resulting in a high degree of alignment between training content and workforce needs.

Suzhou has placed strong emphasis on integrating work and study through practical, industry-embedded training models. By establishing “enterprise-customized classes” and “skills enhancement night schools,” Suzhou vocational colleges have created dual learning environments that span both workplace production settings and on-campus training facilities. Courses are structured around project-based, job-specific modules, fostering deep alignment between practical instruction and real-world job tasks. This integration significantly enhances both the applicability and adaptability of training, equipping graduates with immediate workplace readiness.

Ningbo, on the other hand, has made significant strides in promoting the digital transformation of social training. The city relies on a unified Vocational Training Public Service Platform that consolidates all local training resources, project listings, and instructor databases. The platform supports full-cycle online management, from registration and real-time supervision to subsidy application. Moreover, several higher vocational institutions have developed smart learning platforms that embed video lectures, online assessments, and skill simulations into the training system. These digital tools have effectively expanded training accessibility, improved learning flexibility, and broken traditional time and location constraints.

Across these developed regions, common characteristics can be observed in their approach to vocational social training. Government plays a leading role, while enterprises actively participate and schools serve as the primary implementers. Training programs are closely aligned with industrial chains and occupational demands, resulting in highly customized content. At the same time, advanced digital infrastructure enables comprehensive resource integration and enhances the quality and scalability of services. These best practices offer important lessons for Jiujiang as it works to modernize its local training system and elevate the contribution of vocational colleges to regional economic development.

## **6. PATH OPTIMIZATION STRATEGIES**

Building on the analysis of key challenges and lessons drawn from leading regions, and considering Jiujiang City's industrial positioning and the foundational capacity of its higher vocational institutions, it is essential to take coordinated actions across institutional design, capability enhancement, supply–demand alignment, and platform development. These efforts aim to establish a social training pathway aligned with regional development strategies.

First, a collaborative mechanism between government, schools, and enterprises should be institutionalized. Given the multi-stakeholder nature of social training, a regular coordination mechanism is necessary. It is recommended that the municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau lead the formation of a “Jiujiang Social Training Coordination Taskforce,” with clearly defined responsibilities and streamlined workflows. Enterprises should proactively publish their skill needs, while government allocates special funding to support project implementation. Higher vocational colleges would respond by designing and delivering demand-driven training programs, fostering a model characterized by resource sharing, coordinated execution, and clearly delineated roles.

Second, efforts should be made to enhance institutional qualifications and resource capacity. Colleges should actively pursue registration as certified social training evaluation organizations, build out internal policies and technical standards, and obtain qualification to independently conduct vocational skill assessments. This would broaden access to government-sponsored training opportunities. Concurrently, schools should identify specific trades where they meet application criteria and pursue targeted credentials in areas like high-quality farmer training or specialized equipment operation. Upgrading training infrastructure and expanding faculty development programs are also critical for improving service quality.

Third, industry–education integration should be deepened through project-based, customized training. Collaboration with industrial parks and leading enterprises should focus on building occupational skill models tailored to specific industry cycles and technologies. A “demand–task–content” logic should guide curriculum design, targeting high-growth fields such as e-commerce, digital marketing, intelligent manufacturing, and construction. This approach enhances both the precision and real-world applicability of training delivery.

Fourth, a robust operational and incentive system should be established. Colleges should implement a unified social training management framework to enable centralized planning and decentralized execution. A dedicated Social Training Office is recommended to oversee project coordination, instructor allocation, and incentive distribution. Social training contributions should be incorporated into annual faculty and department performance appraisals, with specific incentive measures linking training outcomes to promotions, bonuses, and institutional recognition, thereby activating internal motivation across departments.

Fifth, the city should promote the development of integrated online–offline training platforms. Leveraging digital technologies, colleges can establish smart training management systems that support full-process online delivery—covering registration, instruction, evaluation, and funding. An integrated course system comprising “micro-lessons + live sessions + practical guidance” should be developed, particularly tailored to new occupations and flexible workforces, thereby expanding access and service reach beyond traditional classrooms.

Sixth, the certification and feedback loop for training outcomes must be strengthened. A third-party evaluation mechanism should be introduced to assess trainees' performance, completion status, and employment outcomes, ensuring transparent measurement of program impact. A “training–certification–employment” closed-loop system should be developed, along with frameworks for credit accumulation, skill credentialing, and academic recognition. Employment conversion rates and job retention data should be systematically tracked to inform evidence-based policy adjustments and program refinement.

Finally, training efforts should prioritize key and underserved populations. Tailored programs should be developed for groups such as unemployed workers, veterans, and persons with disabilities, combining policy subsidies with social resources. Innovative delivery models such as “community + college” or “enterprise + university” should be explored to expand outreach and improve inclusiveness. This will also enhance the visibility and brand value of vocational colleges as providers of socially responsive training services.

## **7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Social training serves as a critical manifestation of the vocational identity of higher education institutions and a key mechanism for supporting regional socio-economic development. Using Jiujiang City as a case study, this research systematically reviewed the development background, policy environment, and operational landscape of social training in local higher vocational colleges. It analyzed the practical experiences and challenges faced by Jiangxi Polytechnic University and drew lessons from successful models in advanced regions to formulate actionable optimization strategies.

The study finds that Jiujiang enjoys favorable conditions for the expansion of social training—particularly in terms of policy support, industrial demand, and academic resource alignment. However, several persistent issues remain, including insufficient institutional credentials, mismatches between training supply and market needs, underdeveloped management systems, weak market engagement, and limited digital infrastructure. These factors collectively hinder the realization of high-quality development goals.

Drawing inspiration from cities like Shenzhen, Suzhou, and Ningbo, Jiujiang's vocational colleges should prioritize the establishment of cross-sector collaboration mechanisms, enhancement of institutional qualifications and resource readiness, deeper integration with industry needs, and development of smart training platforms.



Complementary measures—such as incentive reform, impact evaluation, and branding strategies—are also essential to scale up, refine, and institutionalize social training as a core function of vocational colleges. These efforts will help position such institutions as central hubs for cultivating high-quality technical and skilled talent.

Future research may further explore differentiated training strategies based on sector-specific talent demands, develop modular course packages and competency frameworks for targeted positions, and build intelligent training data systems and quality evaluation models to support more scientific resource allocation and evidence-based decision-making.

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