Challenges and Pathways in Developing Dual-Qualified Teaching Staff for Higher Vocational Film and Television Majors

WU Lisha LIU Rong

(Shandong Vocational College of Cultural Industries, Qingdao, Shandong 266000, China)

Abstract

In recent years, China's vocational education has entered a new stage of quality improvement and value-added empowerment. Shandong Vocational College of Cultural Industries currently faces practical problems such as misalignment between recognition standards and industry realities, insufficient efficacy of training mechanisms, weak incentives for school–enterprise collaboration, and skewed evaluation and reward orientations. At root, these issues stem from the inherent tension between the stability of education and the rapid iteration of industry, as well as the absence of deep school–enterprise collaboration mechanisms. In response, this paper proposes a systematized "standards–mechanisms–evaluation" triadic pathway, aiming to provide pragmatic, workable solutions for building "dual-qualified" faculty in film and television programs.

Keywords: vocational education; film and television programs; dual-qualified teachers; industry–education integration; case study

Introduction

Under the dual strategic opportunity of the nation's vigorous promotion of a modern vocational education system and Shandong Province's push to build a new highland for creative cultural industries, film- and television-related programs at local higher vocational institutions have unprecedented development potential while also facing an urgent challenge of quality upgrading. Faculty quality lies at the heart of talent cultivation. Building a "dual-qualified" faculty who both understand principles of teaching and learning and possess deep, up-to-date industry practice has become a lifeline for the survival and development of programs.

A new round of technological revolution is reshaping the film and television industry. Emerging technologies such as AIGC and virtual production require faculty to maintain continuously updated, hands-on capabilities. As a rapidly developing institution founded on "culture," Shandong Vocational College of Cultural Industries positions its film-related programs as the main force serving regional cultural-industry development. The outcomes and bottlenecks of the college's "dual-qualified" faculty construction are highly representative among peer institutions in the province, with challenges concentrated in faculty recruitment, development, and school–enterprise cooperation. Traditional, generalized "dual-teacher" models are proving inadequate, revealing a set of distinctive difficulties: the "dual-certificate" recognition standard does not match dynamically evolving industry skills; enterprise secondments are often superficial and fail to touch project cores; front-line experts struggle to integrate into teaching; and evaluation systems under-incentivize practical outputs.

China's film and television industry is undergoing profound technological and business-model upgrades. Rapid advances in 4K/8K ultra-HD, virtual production, AIGC, and cloud computing have significantly altered production methods, workflows, and ecosystems. This swift iteration imposes new demands on skills and professional qualities. Germany's "dual system," in which students receive training both at school and in enterprises, greatly compensates for deficiencies in practical project experience (Kong, 2010). In vocational institutions, the capability structure of the faculty directly determines graduate quality. If faculty cannot keep pace with industrial change, the divorce between theory and practice will cause a "misalignment" with labor-market needs, undermining human-capital support for industrial upgrading. Given the applied, practice-intensive nature of film and television arts—whose training logic differs from general humanities or engineering—the "dual-qualification" requirements are especially comprehensive: solid theoretical literacy is foundational, but advanced technical proficiency and rich project experience are paramount. Currently, however, many teachers in higher-vocational film programs are recruited directly from universities, with limited industry experience—a congenital limitation of "from school to school."

I. Reality Check: Three Core Bottlenecks in Building "Dual-Qualified" Faculty in Film and Television

For application-oriented institutions like Shandong Vocational College of Cultural Industries, building a "dual-qualified" faculty in film and television encounters deep-seated, practical obstacles across three dimensions—recognition, development, and incentives—which severely constrain quality improvement.

(1) Bottlenecks in Recognition: Rigid Standards Misaligned with a Dynamic Industry

At most higher-vocational institutions, "dual-qualification" is recognized via "dual certificates," i.e., a higher-education teaching credential plus a relevant professional qualification or skill-level certificate, requiring teachers to possess fundamental disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical theory, strong technical application ability and practical skills, and the capacity to integrate both (Gu, 2019). In a highly market-driven field like film and television, such standards are rigid and weak.

Lack of authoritative qualification systems. Unlike fields with unified national licensure (e.g., accounting, civil engineering), core roles in film and television (director, screenwriter, cinematographer, editor) lack nationally standardized, high-signal, mandatory certificates. Existing software-centric certifications (e.g., Adobe) often attest only to tool use, not creative ability, aesthetic judgment, or project experience. At this college, an instructor with years of front-line production experience may hold no "director license," with competence evidenced by a portfolio—hard to quantify under the dual-certificate framework.

Severe mismatch between certificates and real capabilities ("credential without competence"). Where certificates do exist, they may test outdated software versions or processes and fail to capture mastery of new workflows such as virtual production and AIGC collaboration. Faculty may chase certificates merely to "tick boxes," far removed from the "combat power" industry actually demands. This misalignment formalizes recognition, fails to identify truly capable dual-qualified teachers, and dampens the motivation of high-ability practitioners.

(2) Bottlenecks in Development: Stalled Two-Way Mobility

"Dual-qualification" is not once-and-for-all; it requires constant contact with industry. Yet current growth pathways suffer blockages in both internal cultivation and external introduction.

Limited gains from enterprise practice; "box-ticking" persists. Industry–education integration and school–enterprise cooperation are the basic mode for cultivating high-quality technical talent in higher-vocational education (Zhao, Sun, & Guan, 2025). Although the college encourages enterprise practice, barriers remain:
• Time: heavy teaching loads make it hard to embed in a full project cycle;
• Depth: due to confidentiality and commercial concerns, enterprises often assign peripheral tasks, limiting access to core creative and technical links—practice

becomes observation;
• Outputs: short practice stints rarely yield substantial works, limiting skill gains. Such “gloss-over” practice cannot drive substantive capability leaps.

Blocked two-way flows; external introduction becomes one-way resistance.
• Hard to recruit: HR rules often privilege degrees (M.A./Ph.D.) over industry track records. An excellent cinematographer may be excluded for lacking formal credentials, throttling the inflow of “living water.”
• Hard to embed: Even when industry mentors (e.g., renowned directors, technical leads) are flexibly hired, their business commitments, irregular availability, limited familiarity with pedagogy, and uncompetitive compensation impede stable, systematic participation across the full training process.

(3) Bottlenecks in Incentives: Misaligned Evaluation Baton

External constraints matter, but internal incentive imbalance is more fundamental. Despite reforms, evaluation in vocational colleges still tends to favor academic research over teaching practice and favor papers and vertical grants over works and projects, draining intrinsic motivation for dual-qualification.

At this college, core criteria for promotion and recognition still revolve around academic papers, vertical grants, and textbooks. Commercial projects led with students, award-winning creative works, enterprise problem-solving (horizontal projects), and original works with industry impact often carry low weight—or are not counted as research outputs. This baton guides faculty to invest energy in paper writing unrelated to their applied practice rather than upgrading industry skills and teaching. Over time, rational actors follow the incentives: faculty who devote themselves to projects and enterprise practice may fall behind in career advancement. This “toil without gain” (or even penalty) expectation powerfully suppresses teachers’ willingness to seek practice, update skills, and deepen partnerships—perhaps the deepest obstacle to building dual-qualified teams.

II. Pathways: A Triadic “Standards–Mechanisms–Evaluation” Solution

To address these bottlenecks, film-and-television programs represented by Shandong Vocational College of Cultural Industries must break path dependence through systemic, deep reforms. The core is to construct a triad that rebuilds recognition standards (foundation), innovates development mechanisms (engine), and reforms evaluation regimes (guarantee), thereby activating both internal vitality and external momentum.

(1) Rebuild Recognition Standards: A Multi-Dimensional, Practice-Centered System

To resolve recognition issues, abandon certificate-centrism and adopt a multi-dimensional, dynamic system that truly measures industry practice and teaching contribution—granting greater weight to practical outputs across four dimensions:

Baseline qualification (threshold). Retain the higher-education teaching credential as the entry threshold. Broaden professional recognition beyond state certificates to include enterprise R&D participation; social training services; flagship-enterprise certifications (e.g., audio-video technology credentials from Huawei, Alibaba, Tencent Cloud); and selections or awards from authoritative international competitions (Wang, Chen, Zhu, & colleagues, 2025).

Representative works (core evidence). Introduce a representative-works system as the core indicator of practical competence. Teachers may submit one or more of the following for review by a school academic committee with internal and external experts:

Film/TV portfolio: Commercial releases, public-service ads, or high-quality short videos for which the applicant served as core creative (director, screenwriter, director of photography, editor, VFX supervisor). Provide on-screen credits, contracts, etc.

Project cases: Horizontal (industry) projects led or co-led, including R&D/consulting; include contract value received, adoption certificates, and client evaluations.

Competition awards: Student works winning national/provincial competitions (e.g., National Advertising Art Competition; industry-themed tracks of the "Internet+" contest), or teacher's own awards at city level and above.

Teaching achievements (education-first): Evidence of converting practice into teaching—e.g., leading the creation of high-quality training bases; developing project-based, workbook-style materials; spearheading impactful teaching reforms; student capstone works adopted or highly rated by enterprises.

Through this "credential + representative works + project outputs + teaching achievements" three-dimensional model, the college can recognize genuine dual-qualified teachers who teach well, create well, and serve industry well.

(2) Innovate Development Mechanisms: Unblocking Internal Cultivation and External Introduction, with Two-Way Flows

To address development bottlenecks, design sustainable mechanisms that activate intrinsic incentives on both sides and enable two-way circulation of talent, resources, and technology.

Deepen internal cultivation: a Dual-Capability Uplift Plan.

Sabbaticals: Every 5–6 years, grant six-month paid sabbaticals to key faculty to work full-time on a complete project at a top studio, TV station, or major platform, with required "bring-backs" (cases, standards) for teaching reform.

Targeted upskilling: Regularly survey skills gaps; partner with Adobe and Blackmagic Design (DaVinci) to run advanced workshops and certifications aligned with the frontier.

Broaden external introduction: build an Industry-Mentor Reservoir.

Special appointments: Create "Industry Professor" and "Master of Skills" roles with contract-based compensation and flexible management. Recruit senior directors, directors of photography, and post-production supervisors from local leaders (e.g., Shandong Film Group, tenants at Qingdao Oriental Movie Metropolis, Jinan media companies) to engage not just in lectures but in revising curricula, co-supervising capstones, and leading real projects.

Recruitment reform: Earmark lines for industry-experienced hires; moderately relax degree requirements for applicants with ≥5 years at well-known firms and strong portfolios, focusing on practical competence and teaching potential.

Enhance collaboration: co-build an industry–academia–research platform.

Dual-teacher workstations: Co-establish on-campus Director Studios, VFX Studios, etc., run as real entities. Enterprises contribute real projects, some equipment, and experts; the college provides space, student teams, and daily operations. Faculty and industry mentors serve as co-PIs, completing commercial projects and student training—achieving organic unity of teaching, production, and R&D (Wang & Shen, 2025).

Project-based teaching: Bring real enterprise briefs (micro-films, corporate promos, short-video operations) into courses and capstones. Implement a dual-lead model: enterprise experts own technical and artistic standards; faculty manage pedagogy and theory—upskilling both students and teachers through live practice.

(3) Reform Evaluation: Install a Contribution-Oriented Incentive Baton

To solve incentive bottlenecks, overhaul evaluation and compensation so that practice-oriented faculty gain recognition, rewards, and career progress.

Promotion reform: a dedicated application-oriented track.
Create a *Teaching Application & Social Service* sequence parallel to the traditional academic track, with clear equivalences:

One influential commercial film/TV work or major horizontal project ≈ one core-journal paper;

One patented/software-copyrighted technology successfully transferred ≈ one provincial-level research project;

Leading the establishment of a high-level on-campus training base or provincial-level integration platform = a key promotion criterion.
This secures a respected career path for practice-strong faculty.

Performance and rewards: emphasize the value of practice.

Dual-qualified stipend: Monthly stipends for recognized dual-qualified faculty, linked to their practice-teaching and partnership workload.

Results-transfer reward fund: Clear revenue-sharing rules so faculty teams receive the majority of horizontal-project income—strongly incentivizing them to seek and deliver projects.

Honors tilt: Prioritize contributors to industry–education integration and social service in internal awards to enhance professional identity and achievement.

III. Conclusion and Prospects

Building a "dual-qualified" faculty is a complex systems project, not a quick fix. The exploration at Shandong Vocational College of Cultural Industries is only a starting point; sustained collaboration among schools, enterprises, faculty, and policymakers remains essential. For schools, resolve and execution are critical—backed by funding, institutional breakthroughs, and resource integration. For enterprises, stronger social responsibility and a strategic view of early-stage talent cultivation are needed, with deeper benefit-sharing mechanisms. For teachers, proactive embrace of change, lifelong learning, and continuous enhancement of dual competencies are imperative. For government and education authorities, macro-level guidance and concrete, enabling policies should further unshackle and empower deep school–enterprise cooperation.

Looking ahead, amid continuing disruption from AIGC, the metaverse, and virtual production, film-and-television faculty development will face new challenges. Future work should further explore: (1) how to build a dynamic, forward-looking standard-updating mechanism for dual-qualification that can sensitively respond to—and even anticipate—technological shifts; (2) how to leverage digital means to construct digital capability profiles for teachers, enabling end-to-end, visualized management and evaluation of growth trajectories, project outputs, and skill updates; and (3) how to deepen the school–enterprise community of shared future, advancing from project cooperation to co-built industry colleges and joint R&D teams, and

realizing co-education of talent, co-management of process, sharing of results, and joint assumption of responsibility.

Only through continuous, systemic innovation and collaboration can we forge film-and-television faculty who are truly battle-ready and battle-tested, thereby providing the core instructional guarantee for cultivating outstanding technical talent capable of leading the industry's future—and ultimately empowering high-quality development of vocational education and the prosperity of the cultural-creative sector.

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