

From Policy Provision to Service Accessibility: A Policy-Instrument Analysis of Graduate Employment and Entrepreneurship Support in Hunan, China

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Abstract: Hunan has expanded its support for university graduates from individual subsidies to a broader mix of recruitment services, housing and living support, entrepreneurship assistance, and public services. As the number of measures has grown, the practical issue is no longer simply whether a policy exists. Graduates also need to know where to find it, whether they qualify, and how to complete the application. Taking policy-instrument theory as a reference, this paper reviews four sets of policy materials made public in Hunan in 2025, including a compilation of 73 support measures, recruitment initiatives, policy interpretations, and fiscal measures for university student entrepreneurship. The documents show that Hunan has moved toward a broader support arrangement in which job services, financial assistance, entrepreneurship support, and public services are increasingly connected. The centralized policy guide and large recruitment events have made information easier to find, while the entrepreneurship measures cover funding, mentoring, incubation, equipment, and housing. The paper argues that the next step is to make existing support easier to use. This includes giving fuller job information, improving links between departments, refining services for graduates coming from outside the province, and using administrative and survey evidence to review implementation over time.

1. Introduction

Graduates rarely base their choice of where to work and settle on a single factor. A suitable job is important, but salary levels, fit with their field of study, and housing costs also matter. Research on graduate migration in China also shows that the movement from hometown to university and then to work is interconnected rather than made up of several independent decisions. Economic conditions such as the location of the university and regional wage levels can affect graduates' initial place of employment [1]; studies also show that place of origin, family background, and city-level characteristics can affect their migration path from university to work [2].

Factors such as the household registration system, public services, economic development, and

city attractiveness jointly affect whether graduates remain in their place of origin or move elsewhere [3,4]. Research also suggests that monetary talent policies have limited marginal effects on retaining graduates [4]. When deciding where to settle, graduates also consider job fit, housing costs, social security, public services, and career development prospects.

In recent years, governments at different levels in Hunan have introduced a series of policy measures to promote employment and entrepreneurship among university graduates. Subsidies have become the most important measure. But they are only one factor in graduates' decisions. Job seekers may also ask: What is the salary? Is there a formal employment contract? Is social insurance provided? What opportunities are there for development? These considerations suggest that policy analysis should not focus only on the amount of government subsidies, but should also consider job quality, supporting public services, and how easy it is for graduates to obtain support.

In recent years, relevant Hunan provincial departments and local governments have gradually expanded policy support for university graduates who work or start businesses in Hunan. In 2025, relevant Hunan provincial departments compiled 73 employment and entrepreneurship support measures and issued a service guide for applicants [5]. The "Gathering Talent in Hunan" special campaign integrated recruitment services, online services, policy information, and the promotion of local development opportunities [6]. Other policy measures cover youth employment channels, entrepreneurship services, and housing support [7]. Xiang Cai Jiao [2025] No. 31 added fiscal support for university student entrepreneurship projects in areas such as curriculum, incubation bases, mentoring, equipment, housing support, and investment funds [8].

Based on these documents, this paper summarizes the change as follows: support is no longer limited to a single subsidy or a small number of recruitment activities, but instead treats employment services, entrepreneurship support, multi-level forms of support, and public services as parts of the same whole. In terms of policy content, these measures cover job search, entry into employment, settling down, and adapting to urban life [5-8].

By analyzing public policy documents and related research, this paper reviews Hunan's current graduate employment policies and how they are implemented, and discusses how the related service processes can be improved. This paper does not evaluate the implementation effect of any individual policy.

2. Analytical Basis and Scope of the Materials

2.1. Policy Instrument Perspective

Existing research has employed various approaches to classify policy instruments. When reviewing relevant literature, Xiu Nan [9] noted that Hood categorized policy instruments into four types—informational, financial, authoritative, and organizational—based on the resources available to the government; whereas Rothwell and Zegveld classified policy instruments into supply-side, environmental, and demand-side types.

In this study, policy instruments refer to the specific means used to translate policy goals into implementation actions [10]. This paper mainly uses the supply-side, environmental, and demand-side classification. The resource-based classification is used only as a supplementary reference, and the two are not combined into a single mutually exclusive classification system.

In this analysis, subsidies, grants, and special allocations are classified under fiscal investment based on their primary function [10]; recruitment services, career guidance, training, public employment services, and digital employment platforms are classified as service provision and human capital development [10].

Policy materials show that innovation platforms and entrepreneurship incubators mainly provide training, space, and related services [8]. Under the definition of supply-side policy instruments as

providing basic support through services, technology, and human-resource inputs [10], this paper treats these measures as supply-side policy instruments.

Demand-side policy instruments include government procurement and market development measures—measures that expand markets and increase employment opportunities through economic or administrative regulation [10].

Because some policies have multiple effects, the classification above is used mainly to facilitate the analysis in this paper. The same policy may be placed in more than one category.

For graduates, the value of employment and entrepreneurship support policies lies in their combined effect. Living allowances can reduce the costs at the beginning of a job search, but they cannot replace a suitable job. Housing support is more useful when the housing provided is close to the workplace. Training is more effective when its content matches actual recruitment needs. The practical effects of these policies depend not only on individual measures, but also on whether the measures work together.

2.2. Sources of Materials and Limits of the Analysis

This analysis mainly draws on four types of materials released or made public in 2025 by relevant Hunan provincial departments [5-8]: a compilation of employment and entrepreneurship policy measures, a special recruitment program, official policy interpretations, and fiscal policies for university student entrepreneurship. These documents cover the main areas of recent provincial-level support. This paper also refers to research on graduate mobility, youth residence, and talent policies. Existing studies link graduates' location choices to employment opportunities, family background, household registration arrangements, and the urban environment [1-4]. A study of graduates from Double First-Class universities in western China found that different talent policy instruments are related to their choice to remain in their home area or move to western China [11]. Another study found that talent policies are associated with the long-term residence intentions of highly educated mobile youth, although this relationship differs markedly across regions [12]. Other studies examine broader links among talent policies, industrial policies, urban innovation, and service-sector development [13-14].

The publication of these policy documents clarifies the support measures, the groups eligible to apply, and the responsible departments. However, the documents themselves cannot show what graduates actually experience when applying for these policies. For example, they do not show how long an application takes in total, whether applicants have to submit the same materials more than once, or whether support is provided when it is needed.

Hunan's compilation of 73 graduate employment support policies and related guides makes previously scattered materials easier for the public to find. The discussion in this paper is therefore based on published materials and focuses on practical questions: How are the different policies arranged? Can graduates use these support measures conveniently?

3. Progress in Hunan's Employment and Entrepreneurship Policies for University Graduates

3.1. From Dispersed Policy Publication to Centralized Integration

The centralized compilation and launch of these 73 graduate employment support policies address a previously overlooked issue: if graduates want to obtain support under a policy, they must first know that the policy exists. Previously, the policies involved multiple departments and the application channels were also scattered. A unified policy guide can therefore save graduates time and make the policies more useful in practice.

The guide sets out the basic eligibility requirements, identifies the department responsible for

handling each application, and explains the application process, with the aim of reducing the need to search across separate sources [5].

This small change has considerable practical significance. Previously, graduates had to search separately on the websites of the human resources and social security, education, finance, science and technology, health, and other competent departments to find relevant policies and application guidance. A unified access point now brings policy resources together and makes it easier for the public to understand government responsibilities, policies, and application guidance.

Even after policies have been formulated, some operational problems remain in implementation. Applicants still need to know whether they meet the relevant requirements, what materials they should prepare, and how to check the progress of their applications. A preliminary self-check based on personal circumstances, together with clear progress tracking, could simplify the process and make existing policies more useful in practice.

3.2. Gradual Integration of Recruitment Services and Policy Promotion

The "Gathering Talent in Hunan" special campaign made a bold attempt to bring recruitment information and employment policy information together on one platform.

Public information shows that the recruitment event in Changsha attracted more than 500 enterprises and public institutions and offered over 14,000 positions [6]. These figures are important because they show the scale of the event. While learning about local support policies, graduates could also directly contact and compare different employers.

This arrangement better reflects the practical considerations of graduates when choosing a city in which to work and settle. Housing is not the only factor. Rent levels, commuting convenience, access to housing support, local public services, and whether a city is suitable for long-term residence can all affect graduates' choices. Presenting employment information and policy information together is therefore more practical than requiring graduates to search for them separately.

The number of vacancies in the recruitment market also indicates the scale of a recruitment event, but it cannot fully reflect job quality. Graduates usually need more specific information, such as pay, social insurance arrangements, working hours, and training or promotion opportunities. Within the limits of commercial confidentiality and the law, employers should provide more detailed job descriptions. This can help graduates judge whether a position suits them and make the published job information more useful.

3.3. More Diverse Entrepreneurship and Living Support

Hunan's fiscal support measures for university student entrepreneurship are not limited to one-off grants. They cover training courses, entrepreneurship mentoring, incubation facilities, equipment support, accommodation support, and entrepreneurship investment funds [8].

These measures have practical value because graduates who choose entrepreneurship often face limited funds, insufficient management experience, difficulty finding business premises, and weak market development capacity. Combining training, mentoring, incubation, and financial support is therefore more practical than cash support alone. This model also leaves room for graduates at different stages of entrepreneurship. For example, a team at the idea stage needs a different type and level of support from a registered business or a business that is expanding.

Housing support and other services for young people have also been included in the policy package [7]. These measures also apply to graduates from other provinces who come to Hunan for work. They may be unfamiliar with local administrative procedures and may not yet have stable social networks. Clear support policies at the provincial level and clear procedures at the

implementation level can make these measures easier for graduates to apply for and benefit from.

To support graduate employment and entrepreneurship, Hunan has introduced measures covering policy information, recruitment and job search, entrepreneurship, and living support [5-8]. Table 1 lists current support and the further improvements proposed in this paper around questions that graduates are likely to ask.

Table 1: Main Components and Service Functions of Hunan's Employment and Entrepreneurship Policies for University Graduates.

Policy Area	Questions Graduates Are Likely to Ask	Current Support and Authors' Suggested Next Steps
Consolidated policy guide and service guide	Where can I find the policy? Am I eligible? Which office handles the application?	Current support [5]: Policies can be searched in one place. Authors' suggested next steps: Link cross-department applications and progress updates more closely.
Job collection and recruitment events	Does the job suit me? What are the pay, contract terms, social-insurance arrangements, and prospects?	Current support [6]: More than 500 employers and over 14,000 positions were announced for the recruitment event. Authors' suggested next steps: Provide fuller information on pay, employment type, social insurance, and career development.
Living allowances and housing support	How do I apply? How long will it take? Is the housing convenient for work?	Current support [7]: Housing-related support includes accommodation and rental or home-purchase subsidies. Authors' suggested next steps: Explain local eligibility rules, processing information, and commuting considerations in greater detail.
Entrepreneurship support	Can I obtain funding, space, mentoring, equipment, and market connections at different stages?	Current support [8]: Entrepreneurship support covers funding, space, mentoring, equipment, accommodation, and investment funds. Authors' suggested next steps: Match services more closely to the stage of the project.
Social security, housing, and public services	Are cross-regional procedures convenient? Where should I go when several departments are involved?	Current support [5,7]: Some social-security, housing, and public-service guidance is included in the policy materials. Authors' suggested next steps: Clarify cross-department referral arrangements and guidance for non-local graduates.

Source: The descriptions of current support are compiled from policy documents [5-8]; the “Authors' Suggested Next Steps” are the authors' analysis and recommendations.

4. Further Improving Employment and Entrepreneurship Services for University Graduates

4.1. Improving the Integrated Service Platform and Administrative Processes

Hunan has developed a unified policy guide and launched online recruitment and service platforms [5-6].

The current task is to connect these separate steps more closely. Graduates should be able to check whether they are eligible, what application materials are required, how to apply, and the progress of their applications, and to obtain relevant advice without repeatedly moving between unrelated web pages and service counters.

If a graduate's educational qualifications or social insurance records have already been verified, electronic information exchange can be used as far as possible, provided that proper authorization is in place and personal information is protected. For applications involving several departments, one clear lead department can be designated to collect, transfer, and provide feedback on materials. This could make existing policy procedures more efficient without changing the substance of the procedures.

4.2. Improving Job Information and Career Development Services

Graduates do not evaluate a job solely on the basis of its title. They also consider whether it matches their field of study, the salary level, whether a formal employment contract will be signed, holiday arrangements, social insurance, and career prospects. Employers should provide more detail in job descriptions without disclosing commercial secrets.

Recruitment information platforms can also display local rental housing, housing support, vocational training, personnel file transfer, and household registration services. This allows graduates to consider both the job and the living conditions and support available in the city. Presenting this information together can make policy promotion more targeted. It also allows graduates to consider these factors together when making a choice.

4.3. Improving the Service Experience for Graduates Coming to Hunan

For graduates coming from other provinces to work in Hunan, coordination with relevant departments can be strengthened in addition to providing regular graduate support policies. Graduates from outside the province may be unfamiliar with Hunan and with local policies and administrative procedures. Services can focus on the first practical matters they need to handle after graduation and provide necessary assistance with housing support, personnel file transfer, and related matters.

4.4. Strengthening Interdepartmental Coordination and Evaluating Policy Implementation

Graduate employment and entrepreneurship work involves multiple departments, including human resources and social security, education, finance, housing and urban-rural development, and science and technology [5,8].

These competent departments have different responsibilities, but they need to work together on graduate employment. Clear divisions of responsibility and information sharing about graduates can help the work proceed smoothly. Local competent departments at different levels should also formulate local implementation rules in light of local conditions, population size, and industry needs.

Policy evaluation can be introduced gradually as graduate employment support policies are

implemented. The number of applications, graduate feedback, processing time, employment destinations, and subsequent indicators are essential for policy evaluation and further improvement. Clear indicators can help show which services are already well known to graduates, where applicants encounter difficulties, and which forms of support still need further improvement. Such evaluation can provide a stronger basis for graduate employment work and talent work across the province.

5. Conclusion

This paper mainly draws on information available through public channels. These sources can show the overall picture of relevant policies and supporting services, but they cannot fully present how the policies operate in practice. Future research will explore how written documents can be compared with actual practice, graduate feedback, employment destinations, and experiences from different counties and cities. Such practical data can help identify which parts of the policies are working well and which need further upgrading, consolidation, or improvement.

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