

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Nursing from Harbin Vocational and Technical

Context and scope

Harbin Vocational and Technical College commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Nursing, which was completed in November 2022.

The Diploma in Nursing is one of 55 programmes currently offered by the College across subject areas including Engineering, Medicine, Financial Services, Art and Design, Logistics, and Information Technology.

The main aims of the benchmarking were to:

- Establish comparability in the context of the UK through reference to the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), and by extension, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)¹
- Assess the extent to which the College's underpinning quality assurance meets a set of international standards.

Key findings

The Diploma in Nursing seeks to prepare students for the National Nurse Practitioner Certificate and employment in a range of professional nursing roles – particular reference in its design has been made to the job requirements of nurses, elderly care nursing assistants, and first responders. In line with national requirements, the Diploma also encompasses “public basic courses” which include topics from arts, social sciences and science domains.

The general entry requirement for the programme is the National College Entrance Examination (NCEE, popularly known as the *gaokao* 高考) – comparable to GCE A Level / RQF Level 3 in the UK – or suitable marks in one of the College's own tests.

The Diploma is a three-year full-time programme. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practice-based simulated learning and assessed professional practice in the form of a hospital internship.

Upon completion, many students enter the workforce; however, some students will be eligible to apply for top-up Benke (本科) / Bachelor degree programmes. These require a minimum of two years of further study, which shows that the Diploma has similar academic progression routes to that of HND, Diploma of Higher Education and other UK Level 5 awards.

¹ To date, a total of 35 countries have now referenced their national education systems to the EQF.

The study revealed several strengths of the Diploma in Nursing, namely that it demonstrated:

- A clear focus on professional preparation and employability, with the aim of developing and delivering programmes which prepare students for registration and practice in a range of key nursing roles.
- High-quality teaching and learning facilities for simulated nursing practice under close supervision of teaching staff.
- Incorporation of a range of assessment methods, with a clear focus on testing students' practical skills.
- Clear processes in place for design, development and regular review, which integrates wide-ranging consultation with industry experts and consideration of market demand to ensure the ongoing relevance of the curriculum.
- An established teacher quality monitoring system, which encompasses regular and unannounced teacher observations, self-reflection tasks, student and peer evaluation, and analysis of student attendance and grades.
- Roles and responsibilities for those involved in teacher management, quality monitoring and evaluation are set out in a clearly documented quality control policy.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Nursing has been found comparable to Level 5 of the RQF and EQF. It has also met international quality standards in the following five areas:

- **Admission**
There is a pre-defined and published admissions policy ensuring transparency in the admissions policy and supporting consistency in admissions decisions
- **Programme development, approval, monitoring and review**
There is a clear process in place for the design, approval and monitoring of programmes
- **Teaching and learning**
There is a formalised process for monitoring the quality and effectiveness of delivery, relevant to the modes of study employed
- **Assessment**
Assessment provides a sufficiently fair, valid and reliable evaluation of the intended knowledge, skills and competencies
- **Information**
The information available to prospective students, current students and other interested stakeholders is accurate, transparent and clear for the intended audience.

Engagement

Harbin Vocational and Technical College has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Review of the Talent Training Programme document to centre programme design around the intended learning outcomes
- Revision of learning outcomes across all programme modules, to ensure they are specific, measurable and feasible, form a firmer basis for assessment design and marking, and demonstrate a stronger emphasis on critical thinking (analysis, evaluation and reflection) skills
- Development of an overarching assessment framework to strengthen overall validity and rigour of assessment to enable closer alignment with international standards and expectations at RQF Level 5.
- Review of assessment criteria across modules as appropriate to better reflect knowledge and/or skills required at different grading levels
- Maintaining and ensuring adoption by all staff of the unified quality assurance handbook.

Ecctis is a gold-standard provider of services in international education, training, and skills, and in the development and recognition of globally portable qualifications. We are an internationally trusted and respected reference point for qualifications and skills standards.

We are UK-based and operate worldwide, with a global network and client base spanning 62 countries and 5 continents. We have a 20-year track record in international consultancy and development.

Ecctis provides official UK national agency services on behalf of the UK Government in qualifications, skills, and migration – including UK ENIC, formerly UK NARIC.

UK ENIC is the UK National Information Centre for global qualifications and skills. Following the UK's leaving the EU, the former UK NARIC recognition agency function changes from a NARIC (which is an EU-only title) to an ENIC (the wider European title for national recognition agencies) in order to meet the UK's continuing treaty obligations under the [Lisbon Recognition Convention](#).

Since 2019, through our China representatives and Beijing office Nalike we have conducted qualification benchmarking in China and fostered educational links between China and other countries, to support the internationalisation efforts of China's higher vocational colleges.