

Evaluation and Benchmarking of the Diploma in Furniture Design from Jiangxi Environmental Engineering Vocational College

Context and scope

Jiangxi Environmental Engineering Vocational College commissioned Ecctis for an independent evaluation and benchmarking of its Diploma in Furniture Design, which was completed in March 2023.

The Diploma in Furniture Design is one of 59 higher vocational programmes delivered by the College, alongside programmes within business, tourism, forestry, and electrical engineering.

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 Furniture Design seeks to develop students' knowledge in furniture manufacturing, furniture design, and handmade carpentry. 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 equating to approximately 2340 hours' guided learning time. Reflecting its vocational focus, the Diploma combines classroom-based study with practical-based simulated learning and an internship that allows students to approach real work scenarios within Furniture Town in Ganzhou City.

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

¹ To date, a total of 36 countries have now referenced their national education systems to the EQF.

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.

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

- Comparable content of subject specific units such as Design Drawing, Furniture Hand Drawing, 3Dmax Renderings, Furniture Modelling Design, Furniture CAD, Furniture Materials and Design Sketch.
- Online platforms that are used to deliver content which creates accessible and flexible learning opportunities for students.
- Internships and graduation projects that provide good opportunities for students to practice their skills in industry supported environments.
- Involvement of industry contacts in sessions and assessments creates a bridge between the programme and industry. This enables students to gain experience and support from industry prior to their graduation.
- Further study possibilities and top up options that increase students' opportunities to work internationally upon graduation.
- An admissions process that is rigorous and fair, with good pre-enrolment support for candidates.
- That students are provided with significant care and attention during their internship. Issues are resolved in a timely and transparent way.

In terms of international comparability, the Diploma in Furniture Design 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

Jiangxi Environmental Engineering Vocational College has committed to further development and engagement encompassing:

- Rewriting learning outcomes to ensure all objectives are specific measurable, and feasible to better reflect the higher-level skills outlined in RQF Level 5.
- Creating a matrix table to map programme level learning outcomes to their corresponding modules level learning outcomes.
- Undertaking a revise of assessment in both the overall assessment framework and the existing assessments to ensure assessments are designed to link clearly to the stated learning outcomes.
- Designing programme specifications (Teaching Plans) that detail the assessment strategies to be used and their link to module learning outcomes.
- 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.